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# Architecture of care in the urban public space: A philosophical inquiry in 'Ethics of care' to inform the nature of the urban public space

Rucha Vivek Newalkar  
*Iowa State University*

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Architecture of care in the urban public space: A philosophical inquiry in 'Ethics of care' to  
inform the nature of the urban public space

by

**Rucha Vivek Newalkar**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Architecture

Program of Study Committee:  
Andrea Wheeler, Major Professor  
Sara Hamideh  
Thomas Leslie

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the  
program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The  
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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2017

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## DEDICATION

TO

Professor Andrea Wheeler & Professor Luce Irigaray

My dearest Andrea and Luce,

I want to humbly dedicate this dissertation to both of you, who have shared, shaped and nurtured my philosophical being in a pensive space of care. I believe that the thoughts and values that I share through this dissertation embody to create such spaces of care in the word of Architecture, human dwellings, and culture.

Also,

TO

My mother Dr. Smita Newalkar, my grandmother 'Aaji', my father Vivek Newalkar and sister Reva, who are in India and without whom I would not be here.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii
PREFACE.....	ix
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	xii
 CHAPTER 1: ECOFEMINIST SUSTAINABILITY FOR URBAN PUBLIC SPACES .....	 1
 CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AND THE NATURE OF THE URBAN PUBLIC SPACE .....	 6
2.1. Space, time and the nature of the urban public space .....	7
2.2. Explorations through a gendered lens.....	12
 CHAPTER 3: DIMENSIONS, DOMINATION & DICHOTOMIES.....	 15
3.1 Dimensions and critical typologies of the public space .....	15
3.2 Situating public space within environmental ethics.....	17
3.3 City spaces through ecological ethics: challenging the Anthropocene.....	18
3.4 Feminist ethics and urban spaces: challenging the androcentrism .....	23
 CHAPTER 4: SPACE AND SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH SEXUATE DIFFERENCE.....	 30
4.1 Subjectivity and sexuate difference .....	30
4.2 Ethic of sexual and sexuate difference .....	32
Being .....	34
Sensing.....	35
Moving.....	35
Aesthetics .....	37
 CHAPTER 5: RELATIONSHIP THROUGH VERBAL AND NONVERBAL ASSOCIATIONS .....	 42
5.1 Fear .....	43
5.2 Belongingness.....	45
5.3 Curiosity and difference .....	47
5.4 Happiness .....	49

CHAPTER 6: RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SUBJECTIVITY, AGENCY, AND RIGHTS .....	52
6.1 Specificity.....	52
6.2 Mobility .....	55
6.3 Accessibility .....	57
6.4 Safety .....	59
6.5 Inclusivity .....	62
CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPING A PERSPECTIVE- WHAT IS AN ETHIC OF CARE? .....	67
7.1 What is an ethic of care?.....	68
7.2 Care and justice .....	70
7.3 Joan tronto's political argument for care .....	71
7.2 Why an ethic of care? .....	74
CHAPTER 8 HOLISTIC CARE THROUGH ETHIC OF SEXUATE DIFFERENCE .....	78
CHAPTER 9: PROPOSING ETHICS OF CARE FOR SUSTAINABLE PLACEMAKING .....	84
9.1 Care and placemaking .....	84
9.2 How can we create public spaces through care? .....	86
Chapter 10: CONCLUSION .....	94
10.1 Summarizing care.....	94
10.2 Future of this care .....	95
10.3 Evoking care .....	96
POSTSCRIPT .....	98
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	99

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10 Day Seminar on Irigaray's ethics and philosophy at University of Bristol, UK, while presenting my paper 'Feminism and sustainability of the urban public space'

**6th International AIARG conference (University of Waterloo, Ireland Jan 2017)** 'Ecofeminist ethics for a better social space' abstract submission under the theme: Critical Space Practice

**Annual Symposium on Sustainability (Iowa State University. Feb 2017)**

Presented Poster on 'Creating sustainable community spaces with ethic of care'

**Transforming Gender and Society (Iowa State University. April 2017)**

Presented my Paper on 'Ecofeminist Ethic of Care for a sustainable urban space' for this special conference by the Women and Gender Studies Program.

**CITY 2017 IAFOR Conference (University of Barcelona, Spain, July 2017)**

'Architecture of care by and for an urban public space'- Paper Presentation

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Illustrating basic moral differences between Care Ethics and Justice Ethics (Clement, 1996) .....	71
Figure 2 Aspects of a public space generated according to Tronto's ethic of care .....	73
Figure 3: Illustration of Kristen Day's identified constraints in women's use of public space because of the ethic of care (Day, 2000) .....	75
Figure 4: Illustration of Kristen Day's possibilities for experiencing and exercising care through women's use of public space (Day, 2000) .....	76
Figure 5: Agnes Denes's Wheatfield in the battery park landfill along the skyline of world trade towers, New York (Denes, 1982) .....	81
Figure 6: EcoBox Carrot city, series of self-managed projects introduced into derelict and underused spaces in Paris' La Chapelle neighborhood, in the 18th Arrondissement, beginning in 2001.....	82
Figure 7: Community Garden in Manhattan New York (Smith & Kurtz, 2003).....	83
Figure 8: A non-hierarchical approach of subjectivity developing philosophy of sustainability through study of ethics of care and sexuate difference .....	85
Figure 9: Thinking about dwelling in public space through care .....	86

## ABSTRACT

Within any urban setting, the public space has always reflected the city's social, economic, cultural, and environmental well-being. In the broader discussion of urban environmental sustainability, however, there has been a pronounced dualism and an implicit hierarchy of value when looking at the city-ecology paradigm. This corresponds to the political-social, human- nature and especially subject-object divides within the perspectives on the sustainability of urban public spaces. I associate this divide and the subsequent domination of pedagogies that lack feminist approaches in analyzing qualitative aspects like experience, well-being, and equity. Do public spaces belong to women and nature? Do women belong to public spaces? If they really do, can it change the nature of the public space?

This dissertation thus adopts a critical eco-feminist perspective, to expand its concepts in relation to urban public spaces to build a holistic definition of urban environmental sustainability. I seek a philosophical inquiry into the ethics of care to shape my argument on the spatial nature of the public space. The methodology adopted uses contemporary feminist philosophy and environmental ethics to critically investigate various aspects that determine the relationship of women and the urban public space. In this philosophical dissertation, firstly, I investigate the public spaces through the spatiotemporal and gendered lens by considering scholarly literature on the nature of the urban public space. Secondly, I draw theoretical threads from most importantly, Luce Irigaray's perspectives on an ethic of sexuate difference and feminine subjectivity to investigate the feminine aspects of the use of public space.

Finally, I develop the concept of the ethic of care, differently, for better addressing the issue of gender equity, environmental sustainability to impact women's political, emotional and relational well-being within the public space. In conclusion, this dissertation advocates 'care' as a central value, to shape the spatial nature of the urban public space and an approach to achieve socio-ecological sustainability and well-being in urban public spaces.





**WOMAN IN PONDERING SPACE OF NATURE**

An illustration evoked after reading the following poetic expression:

## PREFACE

*"So now you trace me, like a country's boundary*

*And I am fixed, stuck*

*Down on the outspread map*

*Of this room, of your mind's continent."*

*"You had a chance to read up on the place before you came:*

*Even allowing for distortion, you knew what you were*

*getting into. And you weren't invited, just lured."* (Atwood, 1987)

I particularly choose to quote this poetic excerpt from Margaret Atwood's selected poems to introduce and situate my research project that concentrates on an ethical inquiry of the urban public space. The words: boundary, fixed, map, room, place, distortion and lured, bear a direct correlation to the discussions I will be focusing on, addressing the architectural space, ecology, experience, and community placemaking. The poem above posits woman as a land and man as a cartographer, colonizer tracing the female body, inappropriately, distorting it, even, though he had a fair chance of knowing everything about it beforehand. This majorly highlights the situation of open public spaces in rapidly developing cities today. The allegory implies that human settlements have exploited the urban land to an extent where the parcels which once were an integral part of the larger ecological ecosystem, now contribute to the divide which is urban and nature. Alongside, sociologically, patriarchal



cultures have conveniently dominated the urban public space leaving women to be lesser in charge, politically, governmentally, experientially and physically, in these spaces.

Predominantly the design approaches taken to address the public space lean more towards quantitative parameters that prescribe visual, morphological and functional approaches.

Even qualitative parameters like experience, well-being, equity, comfort, happiness are reduced through quantitative measures, unable to give justice to the pertaining constraints.

The public space being a morphological, visual, functional, phenomenological, social and cultural entity, fewer researchers delve into the social, humanitarian, theoretical approaches giving an implicit higher hierarchical value to the former group. This hierarchy also

corresponds to the domination and disconnect of human and nature, city and ecology, man and woman and object and subject. I feel it is important to challenge this hierarchy and integrate an interdisciplinary perspective that addresses the spatial-social-ecological nexus.

Acknowledging this gap, I have dedicated this research to develop an ethical standpoint to approach this nexus and to imply effectively on the design or the 'place' that needs to be an urban 'public' space.

The central proposition I ask through this research is: Can open urban public spaces be designed through an ecofeminist ethic of care? Can caring as a public value create more ecologically healthy spaces? Can it change the spatial nature or the 'place' to help women belong to the public space and the public space belong to women?

The above preface sets the platform for this research dissertation. This platform is essentially the female subjective body and our understanding of it in contemporary philosophy, design

theory and spatial practices in urban and architectural design. Throughout the dissertation, I have used poetry and my personal illustrations to let you, the reader, share my space of thought while also throwing light on the problems that have evoked this discussion. These illustrations frame the beginning of each of the chapters to induce an ethics of care that I further develop in this thesis.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I intended to do this research to contribute to the rising fields of transformative approaches that integrate critical theories and ethics with Architecture. The methodology I adopted to do this research is a transformative philosophical approach and involves the critical investigation of theories and informative discussions from the fields of ethics, environmental psychology, ecological ethics, feminist ethics, architecture and urban theory, in response to my research proposal. The methodology also actively integrates my personal engagement with eminent scholars like Luce Irigaray and presentations in various academic seminars and conferences and observations and experiences of the public spaces in cities of New York, London and Mumbai. This is critical eco-feminist study that develops an ethic of care as a transformative approach to the design of the urban public space that addresses several theories of women's subjectivity to develop an equitable environment.

Throughout the study, I refer to Luce Irigaray and her work on the ethics of sexual difference which is Irigaray's criticism of traditional western ethics which she employs by engaging with ethical theories of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Levinas, Merleau Ponty and Spinoza (Irigaray, 1993). I refer to 'sexuate difference' rather than sexual difference, a term that was developed more clearly in the later works of Irigaray's such as 'The Way of Love' and 'Sharing the world'. Irigaray's sexuate difference suggests an ontological difference between sexes (two or more), that is non-hierarchical and irreducible to one another. This difference is transcendental and relational. Irigaray suggests that this non-appropriative

sexuate difference can support a culture that respects other kinds of alterity such as race, age, culture religion etc. I thus found Irigaray's ethical thinking through sexuate difference, most influential to encompass and engage in the questions of space and gender ethics while shielding from misinterpretations and criticism arising from other forms of feminist thinking. I engage in the theory of sexuate difference in detail within the thesis suggesting a cultural reconstruction of sexual difference as a relationship of equality and difference.

Firstly, it was crucial to develop a context and basis to evoke this unique question of care and public spaces. In this first stage of research, I thus focus on getting informed and thorough with feminist theories on environmental ethics, with a concentration on eco feminist ethics to emphasize on the feminine perspective of urban space and public space. Through various scholarly literature, I investigate the sources that discussed particularly with a feminist urban planning perspective addressing public spaces. In this stage, I found it essential to delve into the established theoretical definitions of public spaces and the gendered typologies of an urban public space. As a result, I carry out a literature survey of feminist urban planning theory and I identified eco feminist ethics as an underexplored field with much potential to address the question of sustainability and designing urban public spaces.

In the second stage of research, I concentrate on an ethical inquiry seeking to change and improve the generally adopted placemaking design perspectives for the urban public place. This is an ethical critique of feminist urban design theory, particularly eco-feminist urban design theory. In this section, an ethical critique is developed by analyzing public spaces

through engaging in theory of women's experiences and feelings within phenomenological, feminist geographical, philosophical and urban planning discourses. My focus in this section is to highlight the problem of inequity in women's experiences of leisure, accessibility, movement, connectivity, and care in public spaces. The ethical critique is an ethic of care and it is nurtured by literature particularly aligned with French philosopher, psychoanalyst, and cultural theorist Luce Irigaray and her perspective on sexual difference and transcendental space to seek ethical inquiry of these spaces.

In the final section, I develop my own approach to an ethic of care and detail its implications on women's political agency, their relationship to urban public space and ecological well-being of the space. This section generates possible placemaking guiding principles with respect to aspects that are discussed in the previous sections.

In culmination, this research suggests 'care' to be a value implemented exclusively to public spaces shaping them to be ecologically sustainable and gender equitable spaces. This section also discusses on furthering the field with more extensive overlays of moral theories, and interdisciplinary methodologies of community placemaking, urban design, and sustainable living. The spatial applications on the urban public spaces based on a developed ethic of care will be designed to impact the design theory for urban public spaces and seek to affect policies and placemaking of these urban spaces.



### REVOKING BELONGINGNESS: EARLY ECOFEMINISMS

An illustration inspired by the '**Chipko Movement**' or the '**Chipko Andolan**', that was primarily a forest conservation movement in India that began in 1973 and went on to become a rallying point for many future environmental movements all over the world; it created a precedent for non-violent protest started in India.



## CHAPTER 1: ECOFEMINIST SUSTAINABILITY FOR URBAN PUBLIC SPACES

We live in the era of Anthropocene<sup>1</sup>, a geological period where human activities are dominating and adversely affecting earth's climate and ecological environment. While cities are the major concentrations human settlements, all over the world, it becomes important to address urban sustainability as an effort to minimize the disastrous consequences on the natural environment of human development. In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development laid the foundations of sustainability for the built and natural environment. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the environmental, economic and social as the three chief parameters of achieving integrative sustainability. Consistent and continued research has focused on sustainable building science, but urban open public spaces have also been, albeit to a lesser extent, the subject of attention while addressing urban sustainability.

Within any urban setting, urban public space has always reflected city's social, economic, cultural and environmental life (Un-Habitat, 2015). However, in the broader discussion of urban environmental sustainability, there has often been a pronounced dualism in looking at the city-ecology paradigm (King, 1989). The present dichotomy not only creates a rift between the perspectives of investigating ecological balance and human well-being but also hinders in developing a more holistic approach to sustainability. This breach in the two

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<sup>1</sup> The Anthropocene is a proposed geological dating from the commencement of significant human impact on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. The Anthropocene thus includes, but also transcends, the duration of anthropogenic climate change (Crutzen, 2006) As of August 2016 the term has not yet been officially approved as a recognized subdivision of geological time. Although the Working Group on the Anthropocene (WGA) voted to formally designate the epoch Anthropocene and presented the recommendation to the International Geological Congress on 29 August 2016

perspectives seems analogous to the objective-subjective paradigm, where objective studies often get predominance over subjective inquiries, particularly with respect to the social life of the urban public spaces.

The divide mimics broader urban concepts of property or land ownership. While for applying the concept of sustainability in a broader sense to architecture, space planning, and land use it is crucial to understand the ethical or philosophical value of 'Land'. Aldo Leopold in his work, highlights this subject of 'Land Ethic' essentially asking the question evoking ecological conscience, 'does the land 'belong' to us? Is it ours to develop, trade, oppress to support our notion of development and growth? (Leopold, 1949). The land-relation is nevertheless, still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations.

Almost parallelly, the question of gender equity has been the fundamental issue in the social development process (King, 1989). With respect to environmental sustainability studies, the term equity, however, has been less critically approached, especially in architectural and urban design discourses. Prominent eco-feminist like Vandana Shiva asserted that without the inclusion of feminist concerns for diversity in general, gender equality and social development, 'greenest approaches' are incomplete and may even threaten to intensify women's subordination (Shiva, 1993). Contemporary urban planning conversations and practices follow suit, propagating a clear disjunction of social urban life and nature, which further distances ecological sustainability from the urban (Beery & Wolf-Watz, 2014). Richard Louv recognized this dislocation as '*nature deficit disorder*', which often results from a generational association with synthetic built environments and engineered entertainment,

and the related decrease in first handed connection with nature, learning and holistic well-being. This apparent conditioning of societies has prevailed the dominance of one over the other; human over nature, men over women and man made over natural. Environmental economic theories suggest economic perspectives for sustainable development exhibit common links with eco feminist views being parallel with the traditionally "feminine" values, such as reciprocity, nurturing and cooperation and compassion. These values get often diminished in any capitalist industrial economy that promotes incessant economic growth, often creating social inequities (Shiva, 1993).

An ecofeminist approach towards the sustainability of urban public spaces holds ecology, gender, space and society as inseparable and interdependent (Henderson, Pulido, & Freeman, 2000). Even where gender and practicing sustainability is concerned, involvement from all elements from the society is critical for achieving the sustainability for urban environments. In acknowledging the need for involvement of women in the process of combating climate change, women are nevertheless often portrayed only as victims of climate change who must learn to adapt, rather than potential leaders and decision-makers (UNWomenWatch, 2009). This results in most planning and design theories concentrating on more didactic approaches or 'tokenistic' quantitative approaches that do not address social dimensions of sustainability, satisfactorily. Poststructural feminist methodologies of subjective research and community participation being more informed with humanitarian concerns of social equity can necessarily help in the broader discussions of urban sustainability initiatives (Perkins, 2007).

In this introductory chapter, I have described the broader theme that encompasses my concerns about women's body, the hierarchical relationships and notions of perception and ownership within a predominantly masculine society. Feminist or women's notion of land ownership can be subjectively different than those of men. Their relationship with the land, as suggested by ecofeminist explorations, can be different. These concerns share a connection with the environmental sustainability, space, land and hence I have introduced an eco-feminist perspective. I will be developing terms like the 'ethic of care' and 'ecofeminism' in the context of the urban public spaces in more depth in the subsequent chapters, which emerge quite differently than the conventional definitions.



### NATURE GODDESS IN BONDAGE

Illustration that was evoked during the discussion of women, nature, and space at Luce Irigaray's Seminar, in University of Bristol, June 2017

## CHAPTER 2: WOMEN AND THE NATURE OF THE URBAN PUBLIC SPACE

In this chapter, I explore urban public spaces and present a gendered perspective on women in public space, planning policies and urban theories. I have referred to the scholarly literature on gendered and non-gendered typologies of urban public space to move towards my argument about women and the urban public space.

The phenomenon of public space has evolved through time in different urban fabrics, civilizations, political settings and the urban design practices throughout the world. The urban public space has been under the lens of many different scholars who have extensively studied and tried to decipher the nature of the urban public space along its historic timeline (M Carmona, 2010; Carr, 1992; Gehl, 2011; Mumford, 1961; Whyte, 1980). While these studies have laid out typologies, forms, functions, and dimensions of urban public space and acknowledged the stratification of classes and rise of industrialism with respect to public spaces, they have typically lacked sociological lens which acknowledges the issue of gender and gendered experience in their studies. Political, philosophical and sociological lenses to study the nature of public spaces have been pursued by theorists and philosophers like Jane Jacobs (Jacobs, 2016) Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 2013), Hanna Pitkin (Pitkin, 1981) Gerda Wekerle (Wekerle, 1980) and many more (Bondi & Damaris, 2003; Boys, 1984; Franck, 1998; Franck & Paxson, 1989; Greed, 1994; Rendell, 2002) giving priority to study the public space in light of women's rights, empowerment, feminist theories and research methodologies.

## 2.1. Space, time and the nature of the urban public space

Early examples like the Greek Agora or the Roman Forum followed the aesthetic sensibilities of the privileged power bearers, and women, typically not having this privilege, were not allowed to participate actively in political life. Even 'noble' women's presence was not expected in the Agora, nor their attendance in the socio-cultural activities associated with it. Public spaces in the medieval times developed as a response to the necessary revival of the marketplace for trade expansion and growth of towns (Mumford, 1961). As the marketplaces grew in cities, many European cities like London, Venice, Rome contained civic squares or Piazzas adjacent to their town halls and cathedrals. As urban theorist Mark Girouard mentions, the idea of a piazza expressing civic dignity and therefore unsuitable for commercial activities was preserved into the advent of the fifteenth century in European towns (Girouard, 1995).

The fifteenth-century notion of urban public space conceived the built environment of the urban public plazas to be of grandeur, taking a shift from organically naturally evolving public spaces towards being formally designed and carefully planned places by the renaissance period (Carr, 1992) (p. 55). Women's place in these spaces was limited to socializing almost always accompanied by men. The perspectives towards women in such spaces reduced her body to an objective value and assigned it to the man she was accompanying. Such notions reflected the position of women in the society of the time.

Renaissance squares like St. Peters in Rome or the Place de la Concorde in Paris were the main spaces of assembly places which celebrated civic pride, wealth and monumental iconism, representing the city identity (Carr, 1992). Designing residential quarters around the squares was a popular pattern seen in London where the semi-public character and ability to restrict public access, gained admiration. The public plaza in later centuries developed as a main central common with multiple activities accompanied by arcades of important buildings and meeting houses. This kind of Commons was famous in cities like Philadelphia, San Francisco, New Orleans, etc. The street too evolved as a public space in a way to cater to transportation and vehicular access. Class prejudice and the emphasizing of the rich and the poor was a divide that Mumford had acknowledged prevalent in this kind of new streets. As Wekerle (Wekerle, 1980) points out, women's exclusive identification with the family and the "weaker" sex, not strong enough to associate with strangers in the new city life in coffee houses, cafes, restaurants, clubs, and pedestrian parks emerged in the eighteenth century, put them at risk when in these places. The presence of women in such spaces was a provocation and could incite violence or anger, thereby limiting women's accessibility to public space and their freedom in cities. In cities, a difference was also seen amongst the economic classes where the divide between private household life and the public street presence was different for the working-class women and the middle class or rich women but nevertheless, both had limited access to public spaces without fear of violence or assault.

In her book *City of Women: Sex and class in New York, 1840-1860*, Stansell (Stansell, 1987) notes that working women in the nineteenth century did participate in activities that involved



working for their livelihoods and thus their access was not limited to private spheres. However, their ventures were not completely undeterred by the perception of their presence in public spaces by men. While access to shopping gave comfort and excitement, women did not go to restaurants and clubs alone, unaccompanied by men. Even though women were limited in their participation in public social life, the activities were also very much sex or gender segregated. Stansell even points out that their activities were a replication of their domestic responsibilities of caretaking for others through the emergence of exclusively women spaces and clubs, and their work as volunteers. As a result, even though women's activities were included in public spaces, the society perceived them through their sexuality or potential seduction which required exclusion from the public realm or their domesticity which placed them not in the public realm but at home (Franck & Paxson, 1989).

The late nineteenth century saw Boulevards as public spaces emerging and replicating in European and American cities. This can be seen particularly in L'Enfant's Washington plan where the city's or the nation's wealth, monuments and memorials stood as achievements triumphing a plan of landscaped, arranged classical beauty into the otherwise 'messy' cityscape (Mumford, 1961). These spaces also celebrated almost exclusively the masculine heroisms building national heritage through public spaces around phallic monuments (obelisks), reflection pools and classically landscaped patterns on a larger than human scale.

Parks emerged in cities originally as enclosed areas containing animals to hunt (Carr, 1992). Formal geometric parks in European and American cities were for the royal members of the court being seldom open to the common public. Informal parks like the St. James, Hyde Park in London, had landscaped vistas of water bodies, pathways, and grasslands thus romanticizing a countryside within the urban scenery. These parks like central park however faced restrictions, fencing off to prevent the intermingling of street life and these public spaces (Carr, 1992). The reform era of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century saw social control taking a course to shape the nature of open spaces in cities in the form not of parks but of 'playgrounds'. Organized play, suggesting separate play spaces for boys, girls, toddlers emerged in New York's parks especially focusing on play equipment, gymnastic apparatus and special allocated spaces for sports like basketball, baseball, and football. This era also saw naturalization of these public parks to assimilate middle class 'American' values, educative as well as cultural, essentially to induce healthy and modern lifestyles.

Designing for leisure and leisure time gained impetus in the post-World war period and recreation facilities were assimilated into parks as public services. 1950's witnessed the rise of the new high-density suburb in America and standardization of a public space model was found to be replicated irrespective of the site location and proximity to neighborhoods or other resources (Carr, 1992). This age was also the age of booming car production changing city's pattern to be more car comfortable. The middle class in American cities thus became more interested in land ownership in suburban places and thus, city's public spaces were meant and occupied by poorer and the working class. Social and racial tensions were an

aspect of these spaces as conflicts related to public funds, maintenance, and bias against people of color was prevalent (Carr, 1992).

With the rise of commercialization and consumerism in the late 1950's, urban forms like the farmers market, corporate plaza, festival marketplace, adventure ground, town trail, vest pocket parks, community gardens, waterfront esplanade. Carr stresses on how these diverse forms of public spaces evolved as a result of stratification of the society thus implying inequity in use of the space (Carr, 1992). Communal gardens and informal local gathering gardens by creating vegetable, flower plantation was a response to the environmental movement in the early 1970s in American cities (Franck & Paxson, 1989). Many of these gardens can be seen in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and other northeastern and midwestern cities. The adventure playground was also a typology of public space that emerged in urban parts of England and Scandinavia that encouraged flexible construction of the public space by engaging children and adults in planning the spaces of their respective site. Although these kinds of spaces are more common in European cities, American cities like Irvine, Berkeley have also seen such 'play spaces'. These playgrounds have received criticism for not complying with construction standards, concerns over maintenance responsibility and not being aesthetically pleasing. As a result, there are very few examples of adventure playgrounds today.

Pedestrian Malls and transit malls emerged as a typology to revitalize the then declining downtown in the late 1950s. Indoor malls like the IDS Center in Minneapolis too emerged in

the downtown separating the street and the glass enclosed built environment. William Whyte referred these buildings as 'megastructures with multi purpose complex enclosed in concrete and glass' and stressed the importance of maintaining a relationship with the outdoor street (Whyte, 1980). Greenways or preserved green belts of open space with natural systems proliferated in addition as a response to the environmental movement initiatives to reclaim natural habitats of birds, animals and endangered ecosystems in cities and connecting them to the boundaries of cities and wilderness.

## 2.2. Explorations through a gendered lens

All the above evolution of typologies of public spaces have developed over time and even today, cater to people's changing lifestyles and attitudes. While politics, environmentalism, economy and civil culture are factors that are widely studied to suggest better public spaces in cities, research studies, and planning policies related to women and public spaces are still very much in a minority. Karen Franck and Lynn Paxson published their work in the Human Behavior recognizing six key aspects in which public spaces should be studied and addressed (Franck & Paxson, 1989). Firstly, they argue that it is the socialization of women and girls which develop differently in girls because of the socio-cultural context. This can determine tendencies of use, ideas of leisure and their day to day activities. These studies when conducted through a feminist ethical lens, however, can also begin to help create positive behavioral attitudes of women in public spaces.

Secondly, household work and childcare, which were historically exclusive activities to women, up until the later part of the twentieth century was a key deterrent in women's use of public spaces in cities. Research shows that this is the case even today in America where mothers are still responsible for most of the childcare and household activities twice as much as fathers. These attitudes too should be addressed while designing public spaces. Thirdly, traveling was another factor that Franck and Paxson identified as women use more public transport and have to travel more for chores and childcare related activities. These tendencies can be under slow change even today as people are reacting to environmental lifestyle changes and improvements in public transport systems but none the less affect the environment of the public space.

Crime and fear were identified as two of the most crucial aspects, however, limiting women's use of public spaces. While extensive studies show a majority of women cite fear as the primary deterrent in avoiding public spaces, a feeling of their personal lack of competence to combat possible attacks was also reported in studies conducted in the 1980s. Crime, street harassment and fear of crime remain one of the most crucial aspects of women's use and public space today which get continuously reinforced through cultural biases, male dominated spaces, inefficient design and objectification of female bodies through media, graffiti and advertising. While surveillance is sought as a remedy in many urban places to combat violent attacks, women have reported fear of isolation and feel unsafe in dark, secluded spaces. Jane Jacobs in her book, 'Death and life of great American cities, stress on

the concept of 'eyes on the streets' effectively having public spaces oriented facing the streets and by enriching the sidewalk with various activity spaces (Jacobs, 1961).

All these factors ultimately restrict the mobility and constrain women to a far more limited manner in public space, and in the necessary activities that keep the public space active and alive. As a continuous reinforcement loop, these factors come into play to reduce female presence and engagement within such spaces ultimately serving for male-dominated spaces and acting against the very 'public' and inclusive nature of these spaces.

In this chapter have elaboratively cited the design theories and literature addressing the urban public space while highlighting a neglect of women's realities and experiences to occupy, belong and construct these spaces. In the next chapter, I seek to investigate the factors that maintain this artificial and lopsided dichotomy to help us understand if this loop can be broken for an equitable public space.

## CHAPTER 3: DIMENSIONS, DOMINATION & DICHOTOMIES

Urban space is a made up of a complex network of objects, humans, non-humans actors; natural and built conditions, intermingling functions, and activities; and infinite permutations and combinations of these components. A cityscape is a human creation which creates conditions for the study of perception, and emotions. Anthropocentric<sup>2</sup> and now-anthropocentric inquiries have been pursued in the fields of philosophy, deep ecology, eco-aesthetics, feminist and animalist discourses, and have often challenged what can be termed as the city-ecology dualism. In this chapter, I thus investigate the dimensions of the urban public space with respect to these discussions of anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric discourses and study existing dichotomies and dominations of one entity over the other.

### 3.1 Dimensions and critical typologies of the public space

Varied dimensions of the public space in the city have been subject to spatial, political, sociological and ecological discussions. The various established and implied typologies of urban public space exhibit all these dimensions in different ways and in different contexts. Matthew Carmona in his book '*Public Spaces urban spaces*' (M Carmona, 2010), elaborates on six dimensions of any urban space: morphological, perceptual, social, visual, functional and temporal. Each of these dimensions has been studied, and he suggests numerous

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<sup>2</sup> Anthropocentrism is a term used to highlight the belief that considers human beings to be the most significant entity of the universe and interprets or regards the world in terms of only human values and experiences. This is the central problematic concept used in environmental philosophy seeks to look at the connection of environmental sustainability and human development. Feminist environmental studies also see it as a root problem in deterioration of the environment (Girouard, 1995)

qualitative and quantitative methodologies, to further the urban planning strategies of economic development, environmental balance, and social cohesion.

Carmona in his critique of contemporary urban spaces cities over managed and under managed public spaces as two typologies (Matthew Carmona, 2010). Dense cities that have been subject to incessant economic growth and expansions have exhibited under managed, lost and neglected spaces (Trancik, 1986) that have seen a repercussion of lack of care, consideration and overuse of automobiles rendering these spaces either as 'invaded' or spaces that just pass by through the car view (Gehl & Gemzoe, 2001). These spaces not only add to the degradation of the environmental health of the city but also create dangerous areas in a community that harm the most vulnerable users of potential public space.

Exclusionary and segregated spaces that are often claimed by a particular set of users are similarly dangerous and unhealthy. The increasing gap between private lifestyles and community spaces and the subsequent decline of people's belongingness to open public spaces have nevertheless, been a catalyst for another typology of domestic private spaces replacing community spaces. Oldenburg (Oldenburg, 1989) coined 'third places' like cafes, bookstores, bars, coffee shops, hair salons and private hangouts as the then emerging public spaces catering to people's need of socializing to live a fulfilled life amidst the setting of isolated nuclear families. Virtual spaces (Matthew Carmona, 2010), also, that started with chat rooms and game rooms have rapidly evolved into social networking websites, public forums etc, create psychologically public spaces to connect and communicate, bypassing the need to physically access the real space. These spaces too, challenge the use of real world



public spaces today and have a significant impact on the way how public spaces can change the urban socio-ecological systems but not always in positive ways.

### 3.2 Situating public space within environmental ethics

While the study and subsequent design, planning, zoning, and development strategies of urban spaces and systems, post-industrialization, has enjoyed the exclusive human perspective, the global acknowledgment of an environmental crisis has obligated Nations to adopt the 'Sustainable development' goals for 'greener' cities. World Commission on Environment and Development's 'Our Common Future' (Brundtland et al., 1987) commonly known as the 'Brundtland Report' addressed the possibility for a new era of economic growth, one that must be based on policies that sustain and expand the environmental resource base. The report based on the then latest available best scientific evidence urged nations to secure the resources to sustain this and coming generations. Noting the numerous social and environmental threats, experienced by the world at large, the report suggested that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environmental issues. The report addresses a need for improvement in technology, social organizations, political systems, international decision-making and global participation for managing natural resources and protecting the environment in the new era of economic growth. This effectively established the foundation upon which technological approaches to sustainability have been tied to global monetary and legal structures. In the built environments sector, the report sanctioned the built environment professions development of 'sustainable' advanced

urban and building technology markets over the past twenty-five years, under the title of varied environmental terms like 'green', 'responsive' or 'environmental'.

However, the widely encompassing term 'sustainability' has since then developed, used and misused for commercial and economic purposes with what could be called superficial, anthropocentric and often androcentric interventions claiming to be sustainable design.

Challenging the above-biased perspectives, discourses within ecological ethics, feminist theory, and environmental ethics have called for an ethical shift in thinking about spaces and our spatiotemporal relationships. In the following sections, I thus investigate how ethical perspectives have developed to inform the quality of urban spaces, challenging the andro-anthropocentric ally governed dichotomies.

### 3.3 City spaces through ecological ethics: challenging the Anthropocene

Anthropocene is a term widely used to represent the present time interval, in which many geologically significant conditions and processes are profoundly altered by human activities.

With the legalization of instruments of finance like the "ecosystem services," the green economy has been lead towards privatization, scarcity, confusion of the independent element of living nature and kept the community's right to engage in meaningful

relationships with their environment, at a distance. Our perspective of looking at the world as dead, non-living objectified, as buildings and design objects, using technology, economic or even 'ecological' means has led to the drastic changes in living nature.

Understanding the value of 'land' has been a focus of various ecologists and environmentalist philosophers. In the context of urban land use and development, an eco-ethical concern was developed by Aldo Leopold's 'Land Ethic' asking questions evoking ecological consciences, like: 'does the land 'belong' to us? Is it ours to develop, trade, oppress to support our notion of development and growth? Leopold highlights his ethical questions by referring to the story of Odysseus. He mentions that when Odysseus returned from the wars in Troy, he hanged all on one rope a dozen slave-girls of his household whom he suspected of misbehavior during his absence. This hanging involved no question of propriety. The girls were property. He concludes that in the trade, exchange, and disposal of slave girls then, and land, the property is described as a traditional transaction between men. The disposal of property was then, and even as now, a matter of expediency, not of right and wrong. Land, like Odysseus' slave-girls or the underlying meanings of customs in a traditional patriarchal society, is still property. The land-relation, our relationship to the land is still strictly economic, one of property, entailing privileges but not obligations, and undermining women's possible relation to land even as property.

Philosopher of technology, Lewis Mumford, in the broader summary of a post-industrial world, mentions the three different time intervals that the city has been evolving in terms of technology. The paleotechnic: pre-industrial world, the neotechnic: the post-industrial world of automation, production and consumption and the biotechnic: the future restorative organic form of the world that does justice to all living organism and human personalities

(Mumford, 1961). Highlighting the traditional environmental ethical point of view, Mumford implemented a regionalist perspective, stating that strong regional centers of culture are the basis of “active and securely grounded local life” (Brennan, 2015). Mumford’s critical perspective was more concerned about the emergence of an under-industrialized capitalism of a “the mega-machine”, one that would oppress and dominate human creativity and freedom, and one that—despite being a creation of human inventions and rationality (Mumford, 1967). Reflecting on Mumford’s view, today’s age is still a neotechnic one where most solutions and ethical decisions are sought through economic and technological interventions. However, his views still incline towards anthropocentric attitudes as his work still stresses human culture more than ecological concerns.

Challenging the city-nature or city-ecology paradigms, deep ecology theories that originated from Scandinavian philosopher Arne Næss (Naess, 1973, 1984, 1986, 1987; Naess, Drengson, & Devall, 2008; Naess & Kumar, 1992; Naess & Rothenberg, 1990) during the 1970s affected politics concerning environmental ethics. Contrasting the anthropocentric views “deep ecology” thinkers promote “biospheric egalitarianism”, assigning similar values and rights to all living organisms and bios (Brennan, 2015). Deep ecologists took inspirations from rural, simple lifestyles, giving inherent value to taking care of oneself and the non-human others but rejecting atomistic individualism.

Deep ecologists like Naess, outlining his term ecosophy stated “quality of life is considered to be something incompatible with artificial, material standards above that necessary for the

satisfaction of fundamental needs, and secondly, that ecological considerations are to be regarded as preconditions for life quality, therefore not outside human responsibility. The lifestyle of the majority should be changed so that the material standard of living in the Western countries becomes universalisable within this century. A consumption over and above that which everyone can attain within the foreseeable future cannot be justified” (Naess & Rothenberg, 1990). These ethics sought connections with spirituality pronouncing identification of self within the ecological setting to evoke ethical behavior.

These perspectives also echo in contemporary thinkers today seeking refined definitions for sustainability. The concept of the ‘Anthropocene and Enlivenment’ to create a new way of thinking about the world as a living process of mutual transmuting relationships evolve today connecting to similar notions as deep ecology (Weber & Kurt, 2015). These notions equating with a shift in modern physics which realizes that the observer is in an entangled relationship with the system which is observed. Enlightening the importance of ‘Enlivenment’, Andreas Weber asserts “nature is threatened by ignoring the principles of fertile, imaginative interpenetration, which shape existence. The real opportunity of the “Anthropocene” is to create new bios for our thinking—an Enlivenment. This means to understand that man and nature pertain to a reality creating embodied processes of transformative relationships, expressive meaning, and true inwardness in biological subjects.” (Weber & Kurt, 2015, p. 2). The deep ecological thinking was often criticized for aligning with romanticism, social-democratic utilitarianism, weighing human interests in the same measurement with interests of all natural things (Brennan, 2015). Deep ecologists today, however, call for scrutiny of

every scientific step in the light of this 'enlivenment' before technological, political or economic interests, and as a possible solution to sustainable living in the Anthropocene (Fieser & Dowden, n.d.-a).

Deep ecology and its ethics have nevertheless also been challenged by discourses in feminist ethics where the concepts of self or expanded self have been identified as disguised form of human colonialism (Fieser & Dowden, n.d.-a). Feminist ethics are also sub-branched into various modes of approaches, but studies that concentrate on women's problems and environmental problems both, see an inseparable parallel in the two. The important argument that feminist analyses present through their ethical interrogations is the prescription of dualism and polarized valuing of attributes like commercialization, technological prowess, visual aesthetics against the subsequent devaluation of other values like ecological concerns, caregiving, community participation, and rights. Such valuing is then justified through perspectives adhering to masculinity and rationality, being civilized or developed, etc, and this is the perspective is at the core of the problem of sustainable development, sustainable design, and sustainable public urban spaces (Brennan, 2015). The following section thus investigates how feminist approaches in ethics have begun to shape environmental ethics with respect to the urban public space.

### 3.4 Feminist ethics and urban spaces: challenging the androcentrism

Feminist scholars have often criticized the various approaches to urban studies for being male-biased and based on a perception of people as un-gendered (Scholten, Friberg, & Sandén, 2012) (Greed, 1994)(Franck & Paxson, 1989). Clara Greed in her manifesto, 'Women and Planning: Creating Gendered Realities' adopted such a criticism to look at urban spaces through a different model including belief, gender, class, planning subculture, and space. The component of belief was a variable term that encompassed theories of politics, ideology, ethicality, spirituality, and reason. While conceptualizing her study, Greed asserts that patriarchal notions of men, women, culture, livelihood and thus identity, or subjectivity, have always supported the scientific divisions in city planning creating strong dichotomies that assign a hierarchical dominance to the former. The dichotomies in this context include, but are not limited to culture-nature, city-ecology, public-private, professional-academic, quantitative-qualitative, visible-invisible, middle class- working class, work-home, breadwinner-homemaker, economy-wellbeing, rationality-emotional, man-woman, man-other' and the object-subject (Greed, 1994). This dualism has established a sense of hierarchical verticality where feminist discourses on public space planning have highlighted this fundamental cultural divide as the root cause of women's experience of public space.

Table 1: Reproduction of different perspectives in feminist sociological discourses recognized by Pamela Abbot and Claire Wallace

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE	IDENTIFIED REASON FOR OPPRESSION	SOLUTION/DIRECTION
<b>Liberal</b>	Immediate forms of discrimination in western cultures	Legal reforms
<b>Marxist</b>	Exclusion of women from public spheres and production	Women's emancipation in overthrowing capitalism
<b>Post- modern/structuralist</b>	Objectification and control through rationality	Construct social discourse through women's point of view
<b>Dual System</b>	Capitalist and Patriarchal relations	End of capitalism and freedom of women from control of men
<b>Radical</b>	Patriarchy	Freedom of women from control of men
<b>Materialist</b>	Oppression of Women as a social class	Approach women's liberation through social intersectionality
<b>Black</b>	Racial	Address differential situations of racialized individuals

Feminist studies in the field of sociology have been critical in employing varied perspectives within the broader discussion of gender, sexuality and social lives. The above table is a reproduction based on the work of Pamela Abbot and Claire Wallace in their work 'Feminist perspective in sociology' (Abbott, Tyler, & Wallace, 2006), precisely shows seven of the many discourses that branch differently in their reasoning, understanding and prescribed solutions seeking gender equity. The issues discussed under these approaches in planning theories are concerned with the economic status of women and the location and movement of women through the built environment correlate the capitalist production and patriarchal



relationships to the public and domestic life thus addressing the divide between the public and private. However, feminist studies with a deep inclination towards ecological concerns, in many ways overlapping with post-structuralist approaches, highlight the importance of knowledge about how women know about the world, environmental connection and the forms of communication with which women are most contented or by which they are most endangered.

Feminist work that has been pursued under the title of wide title of 'ecofeminism', addressing perspectives on environment and society systematically elaborates on eco feminist perspectives towards sustainable ecological societies, rejecting the anthropocentric view of nature and accepting human beings as part of nature. Unlike deep ecology, the ecofeminist approach intends to address the patriarchal structures of society, economies, and communities to reinstate the natural ecological balance (Littig, 2001). The most significant perspectives that have contributed to the unification of the environmental movement and feminist movement are the works signifying the values that are usually assigned to the feminine and are generally excluded from their applications to the public spheres. Importantly such works include the **ethic of care**, the explorations of **female subjectivity** (specifically concentrating on ethical values that do not adhere to the assigned cultural values to the feminine), the ethics of **sexual and sexuate difference**, the ethics for community engagement and the conjuncture of the problem of assigning ecology and women's secondary status under the dominance of a economic-capitalistically driven world with a primarily masculine perspective of the ethical code. This is what eco-feminist ethicist

contest against. These ethical approaches have diverse overlaps in ecological theories, enlightenment theories, feminist thinking, gender and racial theories, eastern and western cultural theories and sociological sciences. Ecofeminist ethical inquiries thus call for a radical challenge for environmental thinking, politics, biopolitics and traditional social ethical perspectives.

Feminist studies in the discourse of urban planning have often highlighted the lack of ecologically driven feminist approaches. Although cities in the Asian, eastern cultures have developed with more organic textures of human settlement and ecology, imperialism, globalization, and essentially the divide between the east and the west have added toxicity to the way development is seen amidst the sociocultural context. The question here is how the application of ecologically driven feminist approaches to the spatial public environments of the city, add another dimension of the public space i.e. the ecological-feminist.

This chapter was an important threshold to establish a strong base to the further exploration of the women, nature and public space nexus. The terms and philosophies of deep ecology, feminist ethics, environmental ethics, referred in this chapter will be assimilated again in various discussions that lay further. I highlighted the approaches in ethics that address the relationship of urban space to human beings and to gendered women human thus challenging the anthropocentric and androcentric tendencies in space planning. In the next section, I will investigate in more detail and depth the nexus of environment and women's experience in the public spaces. Acknowledging the political, ecological and gendered

dimension of experience of the public space, I will focus on key aspects of public space that specifically relate to female subjectivity and ethical framework.

Various studies of public spaces have generated several indicators for how a public space can be analyzed, designed and be successful. Studies like Stephen Carr's 'Public Space' recognized five types of reasons accounting for people's needs in public spaces: (1) comfort, (2) relaxation, (3) passive engagement with the environment, (4) active engagement with the environment, and (5) discovery (Carr, 1992). John Gehl, in his illustrious work 'Life in between buildings', carefully deciphers how life can happen in urban spaces between the buildings. While research such as Carr's focuses on how public spaces are activated or deactivated through human interpersonal relations, behavior and human tendencies, such careful observations of daily life and activities in public space are nevertheless done through an ungendered lens bypassing the existing hierarchy of the sexes and reinforcing a misunderstanding of users as unsexed subjects. Leonie Sandercock, and Ann Forsyth, in their influential work of defining a gendered agenda in planning, identified three components of feminist political struggle: ( 1) claiming women's right to be actors in the public domain and to work and participate fully in the life of the city; ( 2) carving out and protecting public space for women; and ( 3) redefining the nature and extent of the public domain (Sandercock & Forsyth, 1992) . Continuing thinking in that direction, perception through a combined lens of studies of femininity, female psychology with the integration of essential elements of ecological thinking helps to get closer to the question of equity and ecological sustainability. Feminist theory offers the potential to generate indicators for design and get closer to

addressing questions of equity and ecological sustainability in public space. Qualitative studies of women's experience of public spaces reveal emotional and psychological dimensions of public space.

In the following 3 chapters, I thus Investigate through philosophical and psychological theories to generate important aspects or indicators of the public space that relate to the female psyche more carefully. These aspects are subjectivity, sexuate difference, acts of being, sensing, moving and perceiving aesthetics, feelings of fear, belonging, curiosity and happiness and agency through specificity, mobility, accessibility, safety, and inclusivity.



### THE FEARLESS THREE: GIRL, BULL, AND THE TREE

Reimagining the wall street art in New York with a new meaning. The charging bull was initially established as guerilla act by artist Arturo Di Modica as a symbol of strength, an antidote to New York's flaccid, Low-T economy and stock market economics. The fearless girl was, however, a corporate attempt. The girl, when placed beside the bull, poses as a team implying an animalist, Marxist, Ecofeminist symbol against the toxic corporate world of the wall street.

## CHAPTER 4: SPACE AND SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH SEXUATE DIFFERENCE

### 4.1 Subjectivity and sexuate difference

*“Sexual difference is probably the issue in our time which could be our 'salvation' if we thought it through”.*

Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Irigaray, 1993, p.5)

The above quote is from Luce Irigaray’s pivotal work, ‘An Ethics of Sexual Difference’.

Irigaray’s thinking on sexual difference is a unique perspective that offers strong criticism of the traditional western ethics, which she employs by engaging with ethical theories of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Levinas, Merleau Ponty and Spinoza (Irigaray, 1993). Irigaray approaches the question of sexual difference by analyzing the works of these philosophers, specifically critiquing at the ways in which thought and language—whether in philosophy, science, or psychoanalysis—are gendered. With profound meditations on experiences of love: between fetus and mother, between heterosexual lovers, between women, and between women and their own bodies, Irigaray establishes her ethic of sexual difference, brilliantly distinguishing from the normative gender essentialism and gender-neutral perspectives in various discourses that ought to integrate ethical thinking.

The question of sexual difference, a gendered thinking and its acknowledgment in designing, building, and occupying our environment, is at the heart of the question of built environments, social equity, and sustainability. The open public spaces in cities, that have

been based up, employing, and maintaining the duality of man-woman, subject-object, city-ecology, culture-nature and so on, for so long have been undermining this question of sexual difference, or rather *sexuate* difference (a specific term Irigaray uses to describe problematic descriptions of sexual difference and to emphasize how she is rethinking artificial cultural descriptions). Igniting traditional dualities such as inside-outside, form-content, subject-object, and self-other, in 'An Ethics of sexual difference' (Irigaray, 1993) Irigaray shows how an understanding of such experiences points to gender blindness in both classic and contemporary theory. By highlighting the lack of unappropriated feminine thought's consideration and affect in contemporary philosophical and ethical thinking, Irigaray has argued that a revolution in ethics is required and it can take place only when women insist on the truthfulness of their own spaces of the embodiment.

Irigaray's ethic of sexual difference, in her later scholarly works like 'The Way of Love' (Irigaray, 2004) or 'Sharing the world' (Irigaray, 2008) refined as '*sexuate* difference'. Dismissing the negative hierarchical unsexed binary which assigns a higher value to male in male-female or self in self-other, Irigaray establishes a positive non-hierarchical relationship of equality in consideration and difference in subjectivity. *Sexuate* difference is a question that addresses our well-being and our dwelling. The question of sexual difference has always been appropriated by the masculine subjectivity, assigning hierarchical values of aesthetics, activities, form, texture, spatial arrangement and proximity. However, in this chapter, I look more into the relation of female subjectivity and public space through the lens of Luce Irigaray's 'ethic of sexual difference' or her *sexuate* difference.

## 4.2 Ethic of sexual and sexuate difference

Martin Heidegger, in his lecture 'Building Dwelling Thinking', asked the basic question "What is it to dwell? How does building belong to dwelling?" (Heidegger, 1993) exploring the question further, Heidegger's stance proclaimed dwelling as a basic character of being: a way we are in or upon the world. Through his ontological argument, his question about 'man' or the human (where gender does not enter his philosophical question), Heidegger establishes that for humans, 'being' is 'dwelling' and being, thinking and dwelling are inseparable entities. The question of 'being' thus becomes an important one while thinking about dwelling.

This exploration becomes more complex when we focus on the public space in socio-ecological context. Public urban spaces, in a democratic social setting, belong to all its human users. In this case, the place or the 'locale' connects to the individual's experience of 'being' and thinking. Distancing from the anthropocentric view, ecologically, it belongs to a human, non-human, natural entities, as a place where all the entities can become starting from themselves. The important question that needs exploration here is: can we become starting from ourselves? Luce Irigaray's perspective presents a strong ethical framework to address such a question that faces the cultural conditions that place women, nonhuman, and 'living' activities in a relationship that suggests a proper but now over exploitative use by man.



Irigaray's philosophical and psychoanalytical theories of subjectivity have helped to establish that subjectivity encompasses one's biological sex and the expression of sexuality. Irigaray explains her own rethinking of sexual difference as the opening to thought and to life, which figures man and woman in a nonhierarchical relationship (Irigaray 1993). This difference relates to an interval between two subjectivities, both of which are to be created and continuously reformed created, within this interval. Resonating with Rebecca Hill's analysis of Irigaray's ethic, sexual difference is (Hill, 2015)

- a relationship to the self as a woman (or as a man) different to cultural presumptions
- relationships to objects different to that learn within our traditions
- relationships to other woman subjects and to other man subjects to be culturally recognized
- the nonhierarchical sexual difference between man and woman
- relationships to nonhuman animals that are nonhierarchical and recognize a shared world
- relationships to plants that recognize our interdependence and coexistence
- relationships to the milieu of the Earth and the Cosmos as such as shared
- relationships to the world as shared (Hill, 2015, p.134)

Irigaray's philosophy of sexual difference is specifically influential to analyze the problems that arise from the androcentric perception of public space and neglect towards the feminine psychological perspectives of being, sensing, moving, aesthetics.

## Being

*“The human is what it is objectively ever since its beginning is two, two who are different. Each part of what constitutes the unity of the human species corresponds to a proper being and a proper Being, to an identity of one's own. In order to carry out the destiny of humanity, the man human and the woman-human each have to fulfill what they are and at the same time realize the unity that they constitute.”*

— Luce Irigaray, *Way of Love* (Irigaray, 2004, p.105)

In a conversation ‘Being two in Architectural perspective’ (Irigaray & Wheeler, 2008) conducted between Andrea Wheeler and Luce Irigaray, Irigaray elaborates on the concept of ‘being’ or ‘being-two’. For Irigaray, ‘Living an existence of one’s own requires an awareness of one’s own specific world, whose contents and limits must be recognized and affirmed. Proximity can be created because of the limits with each one, the masculine or the feminine subject surrounds their own particular universe (Irigaray & Wheeler, 2008).’ Irigaray highlights that in the process of being, there is always being-two, that constitutes the third place beyond both the subjectivities and this place belongs to the two. This open space is not empty but it is for a possible welcoming of the other. Irigaray’s calls this place a ‘transcendental space’ where both subject’s sexuate difference exists, not completely known or reducible to each other but is shared and mutual with each other. It could also be called a place of hospitality, nurturing of the other, correspondence, coexistence, sharing or dwelling. It may even be called a place of love. Acknowledging this difference and creating public

spaces that reflect this shared space where men and women can participate in each other's shared activities but also can be or becoming with respect to their own subjective sensibilities could create equitable spaces.

## Sensing

The ethic of sexuate difference also points out the hierarchy of value attached to the visual sensory experience in spaces. Irigaray's writing shows that proximity, intimacy, and experiences of environments are also constructed through sensory perception, especially touch. Recent advances in architectural design, that especially promote making spaces accessible to people with visual impairment as an equal right, highlights the value of sense based models which can greatly impact the spatial-material nature of the place and the social interaction that happens within. Irigaray's special privilege given to the sense of touch can also mean intersubjective interaction with our ecological counterparts: animals, plants, birds in these spaces creating a positive culture of sharing, thinking, being and dwelling. Touch is not only physical, however, we are touched by moods, ambiances, by another's breath and by our shared atmosphere, by a soft movement of air made by a body, by a perfume that floats on the air, moments or compassion offered by another, even by the non-human.

## Moving

Moving is a key aspect that impacts women's use of public space in its most basic way. The understanding movement also relates to deconstructing of the home/voyage duality, as

explored in Meghan Morris's *Sexuality and Space* (Colomina & Bloomer, 1992). In western philosophy (Plato, Aristotle), the movement is conceptualized as a masculine and related to linear models of time whereas location or 'locale' is conceptualized as feminine and static or cyclic temporalities (Colomina & Bloomer, 1992). This assignment is also reflected in the cultural appropriation of women's domesticity and indoors and exclusivity of masculine movement in the public spaces of cities.

Irigaray amounts this to the misinterpretation of women's ability to construct positive material spaces, in western philosophical discourses. While talking about the sexed subject, in her work *Speculum*, Irigaray highlights the significance of sexed origin of passages or 'in between' spaces, re-interpreting Plato's idea of a cave and passage as a more dynamic, multiple sexed spaces of positive material and fluid transformation (Irigaray, 1985). A women's indwelling or moving is thus not a reflection, imitation or a derived form of masculine subjectivity but a different way of generating positive material transformation, interaction, and communication. Recognizing this 'movement' this morphological difference, this difference in relation from starting from ourselves is key to Irigaray's philosophy of sexuate difference.

Architectural reflections of this feminine way of dwelling and moving to create material spaces have been highlighted by designers like Jane Rendell, Sarah Wigglesworth, Kane Weisman, as well as environmental psychologists like Kristen Day who have argued that childcare and activities reflecting other forms of care in open spaces help to create this

positive transformation not only as a spatial construct but social and political agency (Rawes, 2007). Reflecting the concept of material and subjective fluidity in public spaces would mean opening the city to be more cohesive spaces enabling better communication and physical interaction of all the subjects and also connecting with the ecological setting through dwelling.

### Aesthetics

According to Irigaray and other philosophical works of Simone De Beauvoir, Elizabeth Grosz, 'aesthetics' within the patriarchal tradition of arts, have always neglected the "sexual" perspective and eclipsed the expression of the feminine. Feminist philosophy has always noted the duality within the prevalent aesthetic perspective, prescriptive of the object over the subject, reason over emotion and visual over other senses. Feminist film critique Laura Mulvey coined the phrase "male gaze" referring to the frequent framing of objects of visual art so that the viewer is situated in a "masculine" position of appreciation (Mulvey, 1989). Psychoanalytic theories which further explore the concept of male gaze suggest that visual perception is never neutral and always has the power to objectify. As Naomi Scheman states, "Vision is the sense best adapted to express this dehumanization: it works at a distance and need not be reciprocal, it provides a great deal of easily categorized information, it enables the perceiver accurately to locate (pin down) the object, and it provides the gaze, a way of making the visual object aware that she is a visual object. Vision is political, as is visual art, whatever (else) it may be about" (Scheman, 1993)

Art and aesthetics in terms of the Public space are even more challenging because of the psycho-sociological impact and political environment it creates. For Irigaray, expression through art is to 'evoke feminine subjectivity that can be represented in its own terms, not just as an absence of the symbolic order'. As Lina Daley in her review of Irigaray's *Aesthetics* notes, "women need to create the artifacts that would be the symbolic resources to which we can look and with which we can form a feminine imaginary, the lack of which from patriarchy's perspective, has been cited as preventing her accession to culture, and which are necessary for a sexuate culture to be figured" (Daley, 2014, p.392). This extends to a feminist sexuate thinking while designing an artistic space that adopts colors, textures, forms, patterns, and proportions, relating to the positive feminine expression.

Aesthetics within the public space do not limit to objects, their strategic placement and the political meaning they convey. It also relates to the ecological landscape, the material textures that pave and occupy spaces and the natural senses that are evoked by the space. Another notable perspective in the discussion of subjective aesthetics connecting to and ecological well-being is Felix Guattari's construction of subjectivity on the basis of four aspects: 1) material, energetic, semiotic 2) concrete and abstract, mechanistic 3) virtual universes of values 4) finite existential territories. Guattari's exploration and subdivision of subjectivity highlights the 'haecceity'<sup>3</sup> or what can be called 'thisness', i.e. assigning a unique individual value to a subject. Guattari's "ecosophy" that would link environmental ecology to

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<sup>3</sup> Haecceity is a term from medieval scholastic philosophy, first coined by followers of Duns Scotus to denote a concept that he seems to have originated: the discrete qualities, properties or characteristics of a thing that make it a *particular* thing.

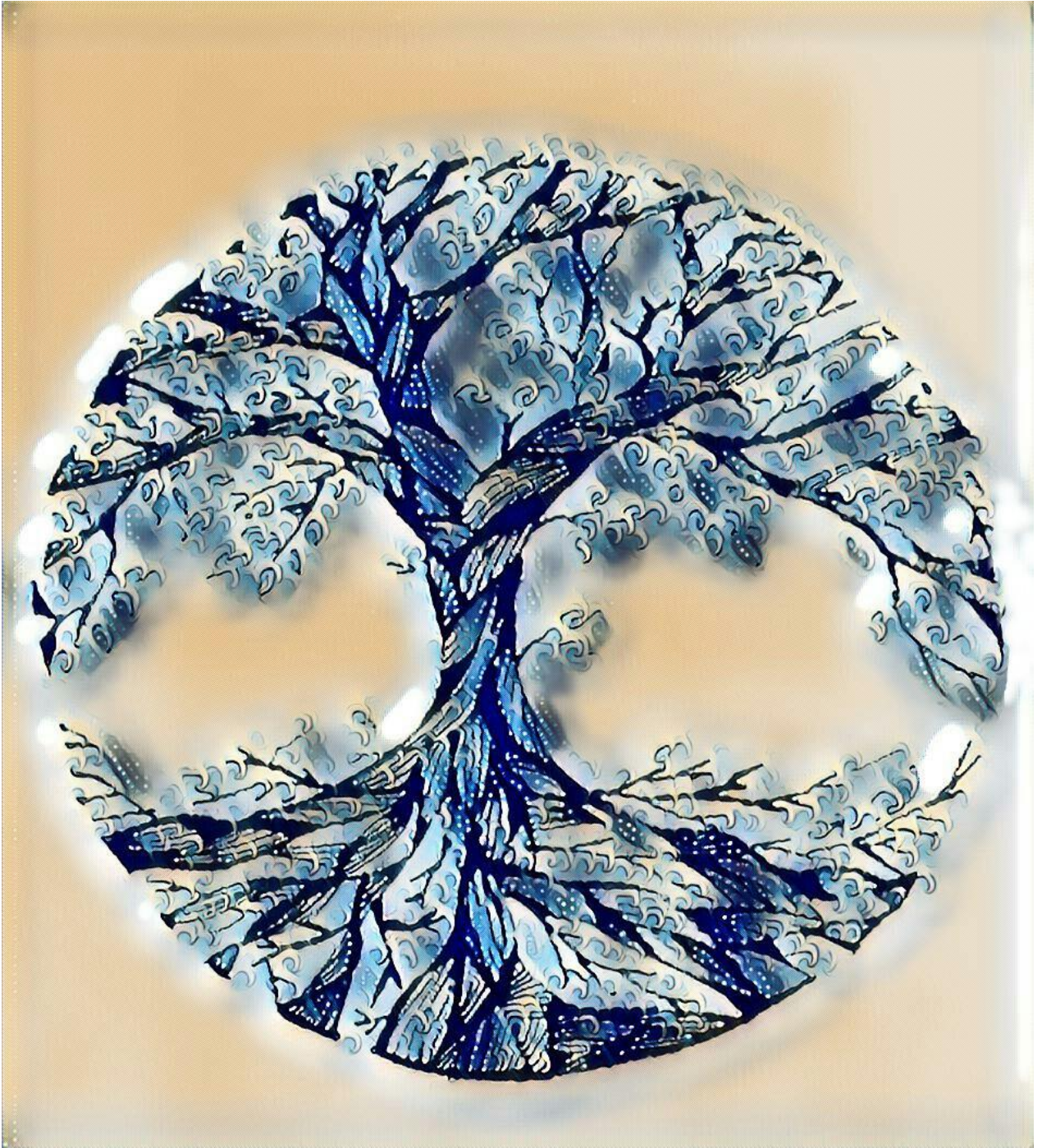
social ecology and mental ecology not only inserts ecological thinking and practice into social, material and technological relations but also in a way confirms that a more feminine language of aesthetics, through Irigaray's ethics, can also create ecosophical public spaces. Irigaray and Guattari's philosophies nevertheless differ in some very distinct ways which most notable are concerned a rethinking of sexuate difference within a radical logic of two.

Sexuate and ecosophical perspectives both suggest developing a culture of aesthetics that stem out of sexuate meanings of beauty, nature, sublimity, affinity, expression, and art. Irigaray's aesthetic is symbolic, suggestive, and positive, rather than restrictive or authoritative of how sexuate difference and sexuate culture might be represented (Daley, 2014). Aesthetics that also explore the feminine aspects of pregnancy, maternity and fluidity with respect to beauty (an aspect that is systematically looked down upon in patriarchal cultures) can create art scapes that are also a political agent for caring in public. As evolving philosophies of 'every aesthetics' including of two subjects emerge (Korsmeyer, 2017), public spaces can celebrate sensual activities of everyday life: experiences, like eating, cooking, gardening, dancing, music wherein it is difficult to fix on a single artist and artwork (Detels, 2006). Such aesthetics can thus create a culture that shifts from the masculine object based or a neural sexed affinity towards art to a more sexuate, sublime, ethically representable and ecologically responsible public art scapes.

In this chapter, I have explored Luce Irigaray's philosophy. I have discussed her ethics of sexual or sexuate difference and its relation, specifically to the questions of women's

dwelling, being and thinking in the public space. I have also discussed Irigaray's aesthetics that imply on spatial nature of places. I have thus begun to shape my ethics of care and suggest how it can allow us to redefine public spaces that recognize the sexuate difference. In the next chapters, I further examine how this spatial ethics could be expressed.





### TREE OF LIFE

A philosophical symbol in many theologies indicating the circular nature of all forms in this cosmic world of energy. I illustrate this artistic depiction of the tree to evoke an interdependent, interconnected thinking in a circular, non-hierarchical form, out of the respect for the cosmic order, the circularity of well being of earth and all its elements

## CHAPTER 5: RELATIONSHIP THROUGH VERBAL AND NONVERBAL ASSOCIATIONS

Qualitative studies in environmental psychology, phenomenology and ecological anthropology have noted the wide range of associations of the physical space, the perceived space and the experienced space. Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms asserts that both mythical space and perceptive space are thoroughly concrete products of consciousness and the distinction between position and content, underlying the construction of "pure" Euclidean geometric space, has not yet been made and cannot be made. (Cassirer, 1955) The physiological and psychoanalytical dissection of built spaces indeed has a dictating impact on the perceptual and sensual experience of the space and thus it is necessary to design and investigate through a psychological lens. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson's cybernetic approach in his work 'Steps to an ecology of mind' highlighted that ecologies operate throughout all modes of psychic expression, as well as in biodiverse physical forms. Bateson indicates that ecology is constituted by the 'difference' or 'pattern' of information that organizes its material and immaterial relations with verbal and non-verbal ways of communication. Like several researchers that adopt sensory ethnographic methodologies, Bateson insists that nonverbal acts of communication are equally important as the verbal ones and spatial patterns and their association with human subjects can be perceived through non-verbal modes of communication of hate, fear, confidence, anxiety, curiosity, and joy.

In this chapter, I investigate how public urban spaces form relationships with women through verbal and non-verbal associations of fear, belongingness, curiosity, difference, happiness, and joy.

## 5.1 Fear

Fear has been one of the key emotional reason to deter women's use of public space.

Feminist qualitative studies of the urban built environment claim that the contemporary strategies that are adopted in combatting the notion of fear in built environments are based on simplistic concepts of the fear of crime, in terms of its experience by individuals within the composition of built environments and social structures (Koskela & Pain, 2000). As feminist works of urban theorists like Gerda Wekele, Clara Greed and others suggest, women's unsafety and fear are firmly in a socio-political framework of patriarchal relations, relating fear to tangible risks and to women's broader social vulnerability as well as highlighting the man-made nature of particularly designed environments (Boys, 1984; Franck & Paxson, 1989; Greed, 1994)

Feminist geographer Rachel Pain identifies a widespread metanarrative, 'globalized fear', in cities and spaces as the public spaces reflect more globalized qualities (Pain, 2009). Pain argues that this fear lacks grounding and is incorporeal and inquisitively unemotional. However, this kind of fear has more hierarchical value in making design safety decisions regarding urban spaces. Feminist interventions question the disembodied masculinism of the

(global) and the limits of local/global binaries, calling attention to the silenced, marginalized and excluded. Global fears often generated through war and international politics create fear of otherness (racial, ethnic, sexual), fear of losing the so-called cultural superiority, fear of presenting aesthetically or culturally unaccepted visual forms and so on. This kind of fear, I note, is also reflected in making design decisions in the public spaces with respect to seating, public art, advertisement, accessibility, availability of child care and activities. Feminist geographers studying human geography of fear, like Pain, conclusively call for an emotional geopolitics of fear which connects political processes and everyday emotional topographies in a less hierarchical, more empowering relationship suggesting critical work on fear of crime; feminist accounts of globalization and geopolitics; and geographies of emotion and affect (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Pain, 2009; Valentine, 2016).

Spatially, women have experienced fear in spaces that mostly inhibit their visibility, inclusiveness, and accessibility. The narrative experiences of women in studies conducted for have showed women feared confined, dark, alleyways, isolated car parks, spaces with intrusive walls that could hide possible attackers, long closed passages, subways, densely vegetated pathways, dim light, dark colored walls, blind turns, vandalism and obscene graffiti (Valentine, 2016). Architectural designing of the experience of the place through women's feeling of fear can thus be informed to create spatial features that battle such narratives of fear through efficient design interventions.

Beyond fears generated through global conditioning and crime, women subjectively feel fearful of social, judgment, failure, insecurities and their traditional/cultural conditioning. Researchers have also noted that different women fear differently on the basis of their age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, class, and caste (Zarate, 2014). Commercial advertisements and representation of human body forms do have an ideologically manipulative effect, especially on susceptible young girls (Nina, 2014; Zarate, 2014). This way, it is the public space that generates fear and insecurity about their body images, behavior or personal choices. Feminist artists like Jane Rendell calls for critical spatial practice with art that provoke us through socio-political questioning and refuse to give up their meanings easily.

## 5.2 Belongingness

Henry Lefebvre, in his noteworthy work 'The production of space' claims that space is a social product and spatial practices can be understood in terms of perception and conception (Henri Lefebvre, 1974). Lefebvre carefully but strategically differentiates representations of space and spaces of representation; where first he sees a representation of space involving dominant codes and system operations while spaces of representation are the spaces of resistance, invention, and imagination. Women's belongingness in the public space is affected by both of these aspects where the representation of spaces like 'marketplace', 'playground', 'jogging parks' operated on a more restrictive level challenging belongingness to space while spaces of representation that are community-based allow participation, intervention and thus employ belongingness.

Lefebvre defined the concept of 'abstract space' which is "a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a merchandised space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable; a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles. Economic space and political space thus coverage towards an elimination of all differences " (H Lefebvre, 1979, p.293).

Although Henri Lefebvre's all perspectives could not be identified as feminist, I refer to the concept of 'abstract space' in this discussion of belongingness because of the subtleties of meeting, gathering or passing through shopping malls, market plazas, streets, squares, leisure centres, waterfronts are more pronounced in their impact on cultures of consumption than in terms of participating and shaping civic and political culture (Amin, 2008). Women's accessibility and freedom within the public space, then, gets reduced to being just the economic consumers supporting the capitalist economy of the space, thus hampering their agency and ability to create the space and the feeling of belongingness to space (Sheller, 2008; Wekerle, 1980). Exclusively consumerism based urban spaces are not only environmentally unsustainable but also act to decrease political agencies of women reducing them to the status of social reproducers of capital. As scholars of gender, culture, and eco feminist economics note, reducing the material throughput is critical for sustainable economic development and needs to be reflected firstly in the public spaces of urban environments implying subjugation of the culture of consumerism (Perkins, 2007).

### 5.3 Curiosity and difference

Curiosity within the public space is evoked when the users are subjected to the strong desire of knowing or engaging in a different sensory experience. Esteemed scholars of public spaces like John Gehl, William Whyte, Jane Jacobs, all have highlighted that a sense of curiosity or mystery, creates the character of the space. Henry Shaftoe's book 'Convivial Urban Spaces' emphasizes that conviviality, vibrancy, and animation within the public space do not necessarily work with designs that are preoccupied with visual aesthetics catering to the commercial landscape of the urban fabric (Francis, 2009).

Curiosity in its elemental form is the feeling of the otherness or feeling the otherness.

Curiosity is spurred within public spaces in multicultural cities today when a spatial culture of this difference is cultivated. Luce Irigaray's ethic of sexual difference suggests that space corresponds to two subjects and this feeling of the irreducible otherness is what builds the culture of hospitality. In 'Sharing the world', Irigaray notes that although sharing in terms of 'having' food, shelter, meeting one self's and other's needs, for a culture of shared world we need to share our 'being' and 'desire'. Here, Irigaray highlights the importance of 'self-affection' (not be mistaken for auto-eroticism or narcissism) to create our own manner of dwelling—and yet be willing to be changed by the encounter. This idea of space, in an urban setting, would necessarily mean the architectural composition going beyond serving traditional hospitality of functions like eating, drinking, relaxation spaces but an opportunity of people with different backgrounds transform the space in their own subjective ways. It is



also important to cultivate a feminine sense of 'self-affection' in public spaces because of the predominant manly appropriated environments (Irigaray, 2008). Art representing this 'self-affection' can help in a way to cultivate this humble environment.

Irigaray in her thoughts concerning culture and nature in 'Sharing the World' states:

*"Nature is a universal that is shareable by all, males and females, men and women, and can thus be of use in mediating between all. The same does not apply to already constructed worlds and cultures. They are neither universal nor easily shareable."* (Irigaray, 2008)

Irigaray's idea of a hospitality through difference highlights the importance of other sensory experiences than the visual in spatial environments (Irigaray, 2008). Research of several urbanists has also acknowledged the value of smell, touch, and sound to have amazing potential to change the atmosphere of the place. The sensory experience of flowing water, the chirping of birds, engagement with animals in their natural beings have been well proven to be psychologically enriching experiences (Matthew Carmona, 2015)(Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992). These sensory experiences although being nonverbal, are an engaging exercise for curiosity within the public space, where nature becomes a model for hospitality (Still, 2017) (Irigaray, 2008)

Curiosity, in this way, if generated through a space of hospitality, can cultivate this difference between each other (human beings: cultural others) and the natural others (non-humans: ecological others)



## 5.4 Happiness

Happiness in public spaces has many dimensions. Following the discussion of cultural hospitality, happiness can arise through a communal atmosphere of sharing. To emphasize on happiness in this ethical discussion of public space, I refer to the discussion of desire, joyance, and love. Happiness in public spaces has been mostly cultivated through a desire of material transformation than the embodied feelings and perception of the world. These desires, mostly comfort the economic or capital generating strategies that contrast to the positive theory of desire for women. This has been documented well, through examination of gendered desire in market plazas, shopping malls (Colomina & Bloomer, 1992) (Torre, 2017).

In the discussion of public space, it is important to study this 'desire' as it is at the crux of various socio-political connotations. Referring to Irigaray's ethic of sexual difference, desire needs to be positive, non-hierarchical and inclusive of intellectual thinking. Irigaray highlights that desire is exercised differently by male and female subjectivities. Psychoanalytically arranging the argument using the sense of pleasure, Irigaray mentions that for women, desire is plural as her place can be outside the body or within herself, unlike the male phallus which is outside the body. In both the cases, when this desire is exercised, a place becomes a product of the activities in it, or as de Certeau calls it 'a practiced place'. In this sense, happiness acts as a catalyst for a public agency and becomes a positive act of material transformation.

While emphasizing the concept of desire and love, Irigaray also underlines the significance of spatial distance that prevents desires of consuming other's boundaries. In public spaces, it reflects on creating fluidic passages that can display the feminine desire for intimacy and creativity. This concept of the fluidic transformation of spaces can be especially helpful to create dynamic atmospheres in places that diffuse into interiors, the places which are often ignored and cited as dangerous, obnoxious and unsafe by women.

In this chapter, I build a strong argument towards care through the confound discussion of feelings in the public space presenting the difference of feelings between the sexes. This chapter is a pivotal one for developing my own ethic of care in public space. Feelings and desire exist in plurality i.e. inside and outside of the female body. This chapter also insinuates on the neglect of consideration of feminine feelings and desires as a set of experiences that define public spaces for women. The next chapter offers a robust discussion on exercising these feelings through political agency and right to the city.



### CONTEMPLATING IN COEXISTENCE

Animal ethics highlight the subjectivity of animals and their right to be in co-existence with humans. Does the city engage in this co-existence? Can public spaces be these places of celebrating and caring this co-existence?

## CHAPTER 6: RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SUBJECTIVITY, AGENCY, AND RIGHTS

### 6.1 Specificity

Specificity is a term used in architectural discussions to signify the context or place: how a building or object or person is in space and time. It can relate to a public space in a city's historic and cultural context, and also the interpersonal relations of the sexed subject or users of a building or a public space and the intrapersonal dialogue within the individual subject. Specificity in terms of public space thus comprises of a relationship that a place forms with the users and that it evokes in a relationship with oneself. The users in the case of public spaces are not all the human, non-human components of the place have also been established through time: habitats created. To understand specificity in critically and in terms of women, environment, and public spaces, it is nevertheless, important to understand feminist interpretations of problematic notions of culture, globalization, and hospitality. All of which have been examined by feminist theorists and philosophers.

'Culture' is a very broad term encompassing varied notions of individual and communal affiliations. Culture, according to Luce Irigaray is " always constructed out of complex historical and social relations, and an individual is always differentiated by his or her sexed subjectivity" (Irigaray, 1993). The western culture in its scientific and in its art and design discourses, including architecture and urban planning, have focused on arranging elements in homogeneous ways to always form a hierarchy. As a result, spaces formed and the

behaviors induced within them also follow this homogenous universality <sup>4</sup> and thus differences, local practices, and specific needs are ignored (Rawes, 2007).

The contrast of perspectives between the attitude of urban planners and the reality of life is highlighted in the understanding of urban spaces by Jane Jacobs in her work, 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (Jacobs, 2016). Jacobs, who is celebrated by feminists for her research methodologies and bold criticism of the formal urban planning styles, cites an endearing experience of Boston's North end, an old low-rent area with dense Italian American community, little parkland and small blocks. The area was deemed as a 'slum' or an unhealthy parasite by the city planners and developers but Jacobs highlighted the richness and the vibrancy of the space through personal experiences.

Through Irigaray's thinking Peg Rawes, in her work 'Irigaray for Architects' calls Architecture, a social and cultural process where 'more than one space is constructed at the same time' (Rawes, 2007). This multiplicity of space can act to challenge the physical duality of the private and the public by creating spaces like John Gehl's 'semi-public' (Gehl & Gemzoe, 2001) which can also blur the divide between private and public life activities towards a heterogeneousness of activities or address the binary in profoundly different ways.

Irigaray in her interview 'Cultivating a living belongingness' positions her ethics of sexual or sexuate difference as the basis of an ecological ethics (Parker, 2015). Her ethics of sexual

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<sup>4</sup> Homogenous universality here refers to a concept that prescribes exclusive association to a specific group of individuals or particular activity that can be selective in terms of inclusivity and integration with others.

difference informs an ecological phenomenology, in ways to modify our habits of thinking, behaving, and relating to ourselves, to others and to the environment. In addition, Irigaray insists on her concept of self-affection as a theme in an ecological ethics as to gain autonomy with regard to the material and maternal world and in this case, our relation to the ecological surrounding. Irigaray's asserts that "Autonomy within self and surrounding including that of the other with whom I get in touch, so that I can respect their otherness and cultivate sensibility and sensuousness without splitting myself between a natural uneducated part and a part cultivated in a way extraneous to my natural belonging" (Parker, 2015) . Thinking this in terms of public space can reflect on a heterogeneous, multi-dimensioned space that can better the experience of human beings, especially women, to create and belong to an ecological urban culture.

Irigaray's thinking in terms of space, environment, in this case, the 'urban' also coincide with Felix Guattari's argument concerning the interrelations between individual responsibilities and group actions (Mostafavi, 2010) and yet Irigaray's thinking is very different to that of Guattari's as her concern is the development not of one and the same, but a logic of two radically different subjects. Guattari's weight on the identification of "ecosophy problematic" (Guattari, 2000) informs thinking ecological urbanism through deep ecological concerns as a way to shape human existence within new historical contexts leading to a non-anthropocentric perspective of subjectivity. Here, Irigaray's concept of self-affection draws attention to the experience of women and the urban ecological environment as different and a new "ethico-aesthetic" paradigm takes place within the culture.

Specificity with respect to the public spaces thus works on two levels. Firstly, it means being reflective of the needs of the place in the exact geography i.e. the bioregion. This also means reflective of the regions bio-cultural, through a perspective that does not assign a hierarchical value to the species or ecological environment based on their aesthetic affinity, usability, and economic consumption. Secondly, specificity relates to identifying the different needs and desires of women through a deep interrogation of their elemental femininity and not adhering to the sociocultural and thus phallic construct of her femininity.

## 6.2 Mobility

Mobility has been a key aspect and indicator to study the behavior of people in public spaces. Observations of women's mobility within the public space have been studied on various scales: urban/city scale, neighborhood scale, and local/ household scale. Jos Boys in the book *Women and the Man-Made Environment* (Boys, 1984) claimed that women's scale of access to public spaces is more local because of their domestic and care responsibility and also due to inequity in accessing public transport and other alternatives. This is also evident because of the zoning divides in major cities where the homogenous nature of spaces makes difficult, more for women to get beyond the local, neighborhood scale. Boy's research also highlights the social tendency where women are made to appear less mobile assigning their mobility to sexual availability or promiscuity and bodily objectification (Boys, 1984). This is also evident today in western cities like London, New York as well as eastern cities like Mumbai where,

despite an improvement in women's employment, civil rights, and familial traditional (patriarchal) control, it is important to note that sexual harassment and street violence continue to be a deterrent in women's use of public space at any given time.

Restrictions on mobility are also imbibed onto girl children from an early age (Boys, 1984). Dress appropriately, do not mingle around, avoid being alone/unaccompanied, avoid going after dark, are the regular warnings that girls get at home. This, in turn, encourages public spaces to be occupied by men making them an 'exclusionary space' (Matthew Carmona, 2010).

Philosophically, Irigaray's theory of sexuate difference and subjectivity can offer a perspective and motivate the necessary shift in the way we deal with women and mobility in public spaces. For Irigaray, men and women think, play, work and move differently through spaces and her phenomenological examination highlights how women's experiences are often overlooked (Rawes, 2007). In her work 'Speculum', Irigaray elucidates that in western philosophy of Plato, Foucault, or Aristotle, there is a negative association of a woman's material qualities like imitative replication of a man's way of exploration of material space, passivity and wanting of activation through another agent (Irigaray, 1985). Here she explains that the reason of woman's sexual objectification is a reduction of the feminine in two senses: 1) being a metaphysical container<sup>5</sup> for man's immorality and 2) providing a place for

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<sup>5</sup> Metaphysical space is a background against which objects rest and move, with the implication that it can continue to exist in the absence of matter. Here, by metaphysical container, Irigaray means that women are excluded from masculine constructs of morality and thus are a container with immorality as their subjective ethics are considered non-existent.



men's enjoyment (Irigaray, 1985). Women's experience in the public space is still reduced due to similar thinking, where she is expected to respond positively to masculine-capitalistically prescribed activities like shopping, single-handed child care, and passive activities of being an observer, bystander or a trespasser.

Women's mobility in public spaces can be studied with reference to women's active presence, care receiving activities, proximity to other related activities of her daily life and the transportation services available in the city. Her act of moving through the place could, however, be an act that creates a dialogue within herself and outside her body through positive material engagement. This engagement could be in a form of verbal or non-verbal communication, sensory environments and fluidity of spaces, loosening the boundaries within the spaces and creates fluidic spatial transformations possible for successfully co-existing between different activities and in so doing discovering her specificity.

### 6.3 Accessibility

Mobility and accessibility are interrelated terms that define women's relationship with the public space. However, accessibility is impacted more by the physical arrangement of the spaces as commonly, designers and planners exclusively assume the privateness of domestic aspects of women's activities. For example, urban open public spaces that do not have childcare, Medicare, first aid, accessible restrooms, maternity friendly zones, inhibit the use of mothers and children further limiting them to domestic spheres.

Hannah Arendt's notion of public space relating to the concepts of freedom and action is particularly helpful here to understand accessibility and public space. Arendt conceptualizes the public space as a place to show subjective agency. This agency consists of the subject's appearance to others and thus her public identity (Benhabib, 1993). Arendt argues that this "revelation" of identity cannot happen in isolation, it cannot result from self-reflection alone and considers this identity, not just for visibility to others but also to perform of the identity that is 'public self' (Arendt, 2013). The capacity of interaction or communication in the shared patterns of action derives from this identity. Agency, for Arendt, is about political equality. Through this political equation, Arendt states withdrawing or preventing access to a public space or to opportunities for effective interaction within it also results in the denial of agency. Exercising this agency in public space thus can help women interlace their own, personal into the history of their time and place.

For Arendt, public spaces are 'where freedom can appear'. Although her argument for political freedom of choice might seem anthropocentric, her stress on the political agency to create an identity and communicate through one's 'public self' can help women to access opportunities to activate their public agency (Benhabib, 1993). Such agency that supports the physical accessibility of women is also advocated in a way where the boundaries between the private and public spheres blur and this increase the mobility of women. Integration of various activities like child care, child play areas, community kitchens, gardens, and volunteers to engage with the community is functional at women's representation and an agency in public spaces.

Another aspect of this agency and psychological accessibility is the representation of the feminine in the public spaces. The prominent divide between the nature and culture have been often deemed analogous to the divide between women and man, where culture has always been appropriated by masculine perspectives of aesthetics, virtuousness, and integrity, by several feminist thinkers within the fields of cultural theory and architecture (Benhabib, 1993; Greed, 1994; Irigaray, 2012; Jane Rendell, 1999; Ortner, 1972; Rawes, 2007). Feminist studies of art and cultural representation in public spaces have unequivocally noted the majority of monuments, memorials, and sculptures dedicated to war and male leaders (Nina, 2014). A commercial culture that encourages consumerism through evoking insecurities about women's appearance and body, when advertised in public spaces, catalyzes this kind of objectifying cultural representation, harmful for women and their agency. Representations of women are also at issue when considering the accessibility and hospitality of public spaces to women.

## 6.4 Safety

'No country for Women' an internationally recognized gender education initiative in India writes,

*'Public spaces in urban areas are occupied almost unrestrictedly by men. Men seem to possess, on account of their gender, the authority to occupy and manage public spaces. Having been conditioned from childhood to not spend much time in the public, the role of a woman in a public space becomes that of a trespasser. A woman in a public space is expected*

*to have a purpose that is not only clear to her, but also to the ones watching her. Her presence in public spaces is expected to be only in transit from one shelter to another shelter. Her access to public spaces is restricted by notions of time ("is she out too late?"), company ("who is she out with?"), appearance ("what is she wearing?") and purpose ("what is she doing here?") ( No Country for Women, 2016).*

Safety is an issue closely associated with accessibility, mobility, and specificity. It is also a non-quantifiable parameter that is associated with the sense of feeling rather than a degree of a measure. The habitats in public parks can be active during the day but can induce a feeling of insecurity at night. Safety of women in public space is strongly connected to the sense of fear that the phenomenological experience of the place creates.

Surveillance, in Michael Foucault's philosophical works, was identified as a principle of normalizing individuals within the urban environment. Foucault established that in addition to its basic function of identifying and capturing individuals who are committing undesirable acts, surveillance also functions to create in everyone a feeling of always being watched so that they become self-policing. Constant observation of people's behavior was derived from Foucault's philosophical study of the 'Panopticon' where a circular prison has an observation vortex in the center where each inmate's behavior can be watched and this constant vigilance deters their criminal tendencies. Like the panopticon, the form of the urban and public space is regularized and standardized to facilitate the functioning of the industrial city, but the provision of surveillance and appearance of, attempts to discipline the urban and

normalize individuals to function and reproduce the norms of the established power relations. In Foucault's concept of surveillance, generators or those who command power seek invisibility, but the objects those on whom it operates are made the most visible. This can be seen in the designs of European plazas and piazzas and city squares, where the built forms around the large open space act as the surveyors of the open space users.

Physical threats of violence and sexual harassment are often tried to be solved with CCTV surveillance systems in today's cities. Surveillance cameras mostly offer necessary proofs post occupancy of the crime however they fail to completely deter criminal behavior related to violence against women (Boys, 1984; Knapp, 2013; Sheller, 2008). Additionally, surveillance systems have been claimed to inhibit the freedom of mobility as many social critics have also identified the privatization of public space as a key weakening of civic freedom of mobility (Kunstler 1993); (Sorkin 1992). A less hierarchical mode of surveillance can be interpreted through Jane Jacob's 'eyes on the street' concept (Jacobs, 1961). Jacobs's research identified multifunctional spaces with constant street visibility to be places where women have felt safer. Jacobs insists on revitalizing the sidewalks as a place to effectively add the eyes on the streets by providing them active reasons to use the sidewalk. Jacob also finds that storekeepers, food/drink stations, and business people add to the activity of street watching, thereby improving the natural surveillance of the place. This concept can also be seen in Oscar Newman's 'defensible space' which also is the basis for CPTED: Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design natural surveillance (Cozens,

Saville, & Hillier, 2005). CPTED's principles to improve public spaces by designing streets to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic, creating landscape designs that provide surveillance specifically in proximity to designated points of entry and opportunistic points of entry, increasing visibility through fewer barriers and fencing, efficient lighting and utilizing curved streets with multiple viewpoints to multiple houses or places can also create more fluidic transformations in space for users to feel safer.

## 6.5 Inclusivity

Inclusivity in architectural space evokes a sense of community. It reinstates our feeling of social connectivity and belongingness. To a public space which is by definition, a social place inclusively firstly relates to opportunities for community engagement but also to all other factors previously mentioned. A more political definition of inclusivity refers to the policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who are handicapped or learning disabled, or racial and sexual minorities. Feminist work of theorists like Dolores Hayden, Eugene Birch, Leonie Sandercock, and such, have highlighted the highly hegemonically biased nature of planning theory, that emerged in the later part of the twentieth century, in America. Sandercock in her book ' 'Making the Invisible Visible: Multicultural Planning History' blames the urban theories of the twentieth century being unperturbed by racial tensions, gender politics and unable to give up the power of decisiveness to the community (Sandercock, 1998). Hence the politics of planning urban spaces mostly resulted in exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination of racial, ethnic,

gendered minorities. Inclusivity thus evolves as a very important aspect of socio-political nature of the public space.

However, inclusivity with respect to women and planning has been largely problematic everywhere in American cities. As Joan Kelly pointed out, having a gender-neutral perspective, periodization through an exclusively male perspective (her question: was renaissance really for women?) and theorizing a social change without considering the difference is what needs to be challenged (Sandercock, 1998). Inclusivity with respect to racial-ethnic segregation, gender oppression, and discrimination for transgendered and homosexual should thus be studied through the respective historical context acknowledging the difference.

Inclusivity with respect to space interlinks back to Irigaray's ethic of sexuate difference. Irigaray has been one of the few philosophers who established a realist form of essentialism. Essentialism has been a theory established by Plato's idealism, suggesting that everything possesses an unchangeable, attributed 'essence' that defines its form and nature. Essentialism has been hugely criticized in many feminist discourses majorly because of the perception of the concept as reducing women to the traditionally prescribed identities that have led to their socio-political oppression (Spelman, 1988). To politicize agency, strategic essentialism, a term coined by Gayatri Spivak, referred to a political tactic that rejected biological essentialism but claimed that minority groups, nationalities, ethnic groups can make 'strategic' use of essentializing to mobilize on the basis of shared gendered, cultural, or

political identity for representation. Strategic essentialists claimed that it is sometimes advantageous for them to and to bring forward their group identity in a simplified way to achieve certain goals often for equal rights or to oppose the leveling impact of global culture.

Irigaray's work has been accused of essentializing or strategically prescribing it. However, the work of re-reading Irigaray's essentialism, as done by some feminist theorists like Alison Stone (Stone, 2004), reveals that Irigaray's concept of essentialism offers a more politically coherent and realist form of essentialism, which is often misunderstood within feminist discourses. Through her work in 'An ethics of sexual difference', 'Speculum' and 'In the beginning she was', Irigaray revalues femininity, lending it a worth and importance traditionally denied it. Consequently, she effects a shift in the content of femininity, redefining it as intelligible independently of masculinity, as an identity necessarily to reimagine and revalue symbolic femininity – femininity as symbolized and represented in philosophical history (Irigaray, 1993)(Irigaray, 2012). The 'essential' femininity that Irigaray reaffirms thus differentiates itself politically than the originally affirmed in the traditional texts.

Irigaray's essentialism thus agrees on corporeal differences in different sexes and seeks their self-expression through sexual difference. This way identity of women and other marginalized groups can evolve without appropriation or assumptions of the other and create cultures that arise through this self-expression. This concept is very important to



establish a hospitable inclusivity within public spaces and needs adoption in forms like public art, interactive spaces, and functions.

This chapter conveys the important urban and architectural aspects of the public space with respect to the contemporary perspective on women and space. The chapter establishes a new way of looking at the juxtaposition of feminist politics and space. I have explored the areas of specificity, mobility, safety, accessibility, and notions of inclusivity. Through ethical inquiries in Gayatri Spivak's strategic essentialism and a realistic essentialism of Luce Irigaray, I have argued in ways women can build their political agency and reclaim their right towards the city and equal opportunities of wellbeing,



### ELEMENTAL MUTUALISM

This illustration depicts the elemental mutual care that we share with our natural surroundings. The tree cares for us and we care for her

## CHAPTER 7: DEVELOPING A PERSPECTIVE- WHAT IS AN ETHIC OF CARE?

The various aspects of women's experience of the public space, that have been discussed above brings us to point where it is important to construct a perspective that can address all the concerns and guide us to create an architectural language and environmental sustainability in our public spaces. The key conclusions that are derived from the careful exercise discussion of ethics in the above chapters are:

- 1) Adhering to the ethic of sexuate difference, women's subjectivity in the public spaces differ from men, in the way they relate, dwell, move, sense and aesthetically perceive the public space. Public space interventions that account for this difference are necessary.
- 2) Verbal as well as non-verbal associations with public space are important to experience and construct the public space. Women's experiences in public space are deteriorated due to emotional accounts of fear and socially altered feeling of belongingness to space.

Domination of prescribed ways of exploration of spaces through male-based visual forms, spatial forms catering to masculine prescribed definitions of desire, happiness, and development, make public space explorations, an unsatisfactory experience for their subjective self. This disconnect also leads to assigning a secondary status to women as political agents and thus undermine their opportunities of making space.

- 3) Women's mobility, accessibility to different opportunities of participation in communal activities, access to personal care, childcare, safety and inclusivity within the public space is impacted due to lack of spatial and social facilities that create hospitable spaces and provide a space that is their political right to the city.

The problems that are discussed above elucidate the moral disconnect of the way public spaces are designed planned, created and analyzed. These aspects not only demonstrate the divide that is between the masculine and feminine way of dwelling, creating and nurturing their self and the social culture, but also the divide that is between human and nature that differentiates city spaces from the ecosystem, affecting the environmental health of the city. As discussed in the above chapters, this divide and the consequential repercussions on the nature of public space also shed light on the divide between moral thinking (women's morality) and politics of urban spaces. I find this inquiry closely parallel to what the ethic of care scholars have already pointed out and strived to mend this gap. In this chapter, I will refer to the ethic of care, with a desire to acknowledge this gap between feminist moral and political thinking.

### 7.1 What is an ethic of care?

"The ethics of care" was developed as a moral theory signifying the fundamental elements of relationships and dependencies in human life (Fieser & Dowden, n.d.-b). Care ethics, in their basic form, promote valuing human connectedness as a virtue where "care" involves maintaining the world of and meeting the needs of, our self and others. In their basic framework, care ethics seek to adopt a contextual approach in contrast to the abstract and generalizing approach in justice ethics, thereby promoting the well-being of caregivers and care-receivers in social relationships.

Psychologist Carol Gilligan and philosopher Nel Noddings in the mid-1980s charged traditional moral approaches with male bias and asserted the "voice of care" as a legitimate

alternative to the “justice perspective” of liberal human rights theory. Gilligan’s earlier work suggested that the moral development in men and women is different and mutually exclusive while later her work suggested that many people use a combination of both when it comes to decision-making and problem-solving. Feminist philosophers of care like Sara Ruddick presented a case for morality based on ‘maternal thinking.

Justice ethics find the concept of feelings to be a hindrance in imparting justice while the care ethics place feelings to be morally central to their ethical framework. The initial arguments of care ethics by Gilligan, Noddings, and others in the similar family, have been contested with prominent criticisms on the premise that the virtue of ‘care’ being exclusive to women and hence causing their subordination. Critics have also argued that the lack of intersectional, racial applications to approaches in care ethics thus deeming the feminist ethics for ‘white women’, the more important one (Fieser & Dowden, n.d.-b). As some researchers conclude, essentializing women as ‘naturally’ caring denies the constructed nature of gender and may reinforce and justify gender oppression (Puka, 1989; Stacks, 1990; Kroeger-mappes, 1994). Care ethics were criticized for displaying altruism, slave morality, essentialism, and being empirically flawed, parochial and ambiguous, majorly because it was not perceived as a sound political theory. Feminist works of later philosophers like Joan Tronto specifically focused on challenging this criticism by providing more robust frameworks for political application of care.

Care ethicist Grace Clement highlights the problem of the lopsided equation of care give and take as ‘men with more rights and fewer responsibilities to women with lesser rights and

more responsibilities' (Clement, 1996). In planning theory care as a value is specifically ascribed to the private spheres. While works of Jane Jacobs highlighted caring within communities as a factor that is ignored under the economic structures of planning, it was not often thought as a necessary, obligatory or applicable value to the public,

As demonstrated in the discussion in above chapters, multidisciplinary studies related to public spaces conclude that women do not value their personal subjective self over their child-care, familial and domestic responsibilities, again constraints their experience in public space. Oppressive gender and social norms further exacerbate this problem by expecting a perverse, private, selfless version of femininity which often reduces their role as a mere trespasser in these spaces or an object for consumption.

## 7.2 Care and justice

Care ethics provided a strong contrast to the justice ethics basing their model of morality through a feminine perspective. While the justice ethics that evolved through gender neutral or masculine constructions of morality by philosophers like Immanuel Kant and sought to be employed at the inequalities, care ethics are morally concerned at the detachment as a primary cause for moral concern. Following illustration depicts the basic differences in care and justice ethics. I have specifically provided this illustration because public space and activities that occupy the space still reflect thinking through an ethical perspective of justice.

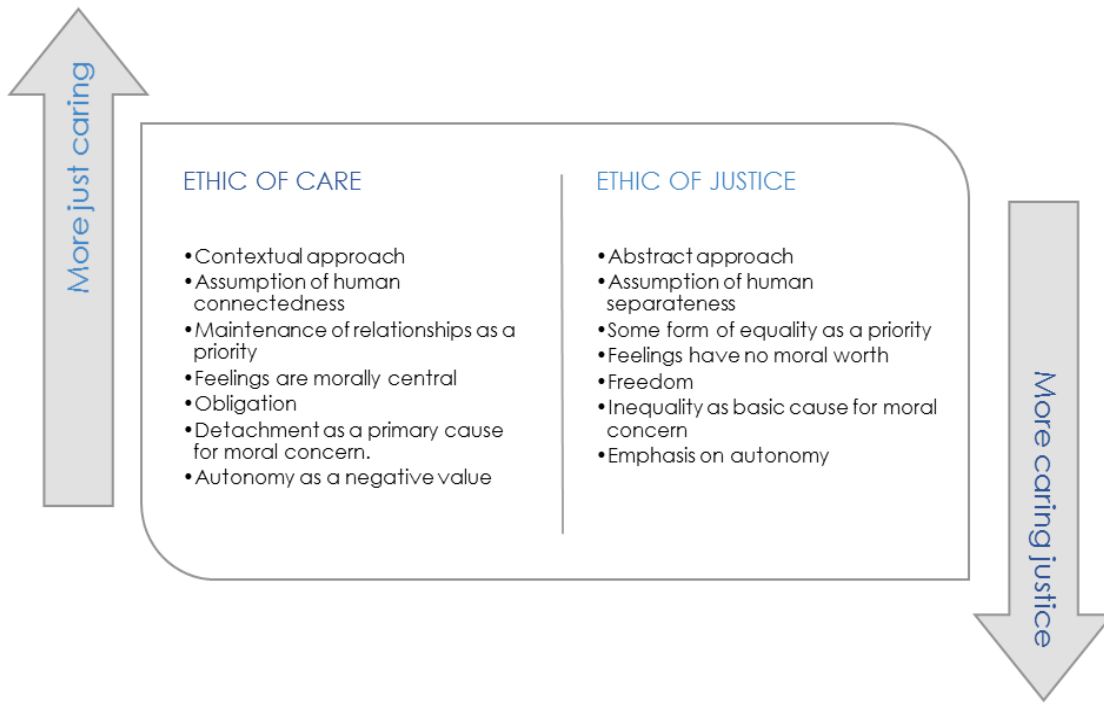


Figure 1: Illustrating basic moral differences between Care Ethics and Justice Ethics (Clement, 1996)

### 7.3 Joan Tronto's political argument for care

The most groundbreaking work on establishing a political framework for care is Joan Tronto's 'Moral Boundaries: A political argument for an ethic of care' (Tronto, 1993). Tronto's core argument in the book was in order to establish a serious ground for morality, there is a need to see a feminist morality in a political framework than only as a set of moral values. Her work engages in arguments that do not concentrate on women's morality singularly but an 'ethic of care' that includes values that are traditionally associated with women (Tronto, 1993, p.5).



Tronto based her argument noting that once moral arguments have a political context, we begin to recognize how boundaries shape moralities. Following this basis, Tronto establishes three boundaries that restrain ideas of morality from their due consideration:

1) The boundary between morality and politics: Morality is seen as thinking what is important to do, how to conduct a relationship with others and be aware and critical of one's approvals and disapprovals. Politics is mainly concerned with the distribution of resources, maintain order and resolve conflicts. Here, Tronto argues that instead of separating these two, care can serve as both moral value and basis for political success (Tronto, 1993, p.6-7)

2)The moral point of view boundary: Morality, since the accepted philosophy of Immanuel Kant, is seen emerging through the standpoint of disinterested, disconnected, disengaged moral actors and thus through reason only and not emotions and feelings. Concerns that are raised through women's morality get a secondary order due to this boundary (Tronto, 1993, p. 8-9)

3)Boundary between public and private life: The divide between the public and private realms make it difficult for an effective impact on women's morality on political state by assigning moral values like care to the private realm and thus to women (Tronto, 1993, p.10)

Tronto thus defines care in a robust political framework as: (1) attentiveness, a tendency to become aware of need; (2) responsibility, a willingness to respond and take care of need; (3) competence, the skill of providing good and successful care; and (4) responsiveness, consideration of the position of others as they see it and recognition of the potential for abuse in care (Tronto, 1993, p.126-136). Tronto's care ethic theory requires continuously



coming back to the real world of daily lived lives in order to generate philosophical and political positions.

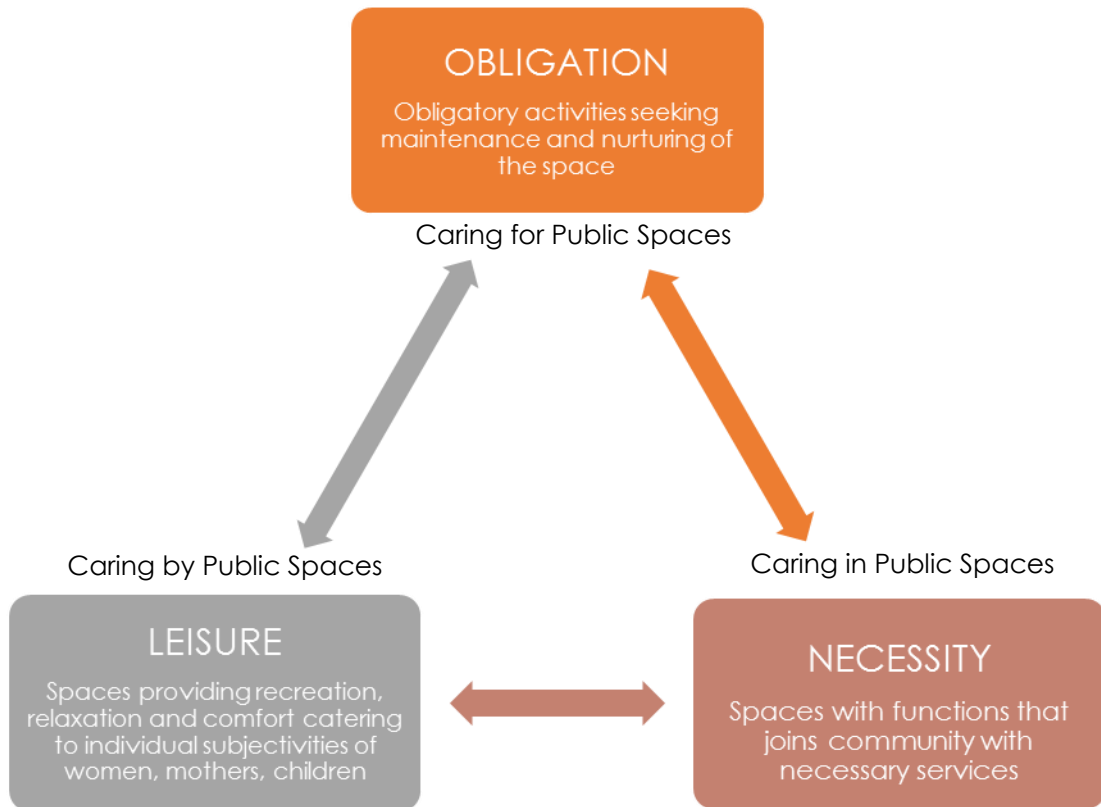


Figure 2 Aspects of a public space generated according to Tronto's ethic of care

Tronto's care ethics would politically imply public spaces to demonstrate obligation of caring for the public space, places providing all the services required by women and creating an environment that provides subjective recreation and leisure opportunities. Public spaces with politically employed care ethic will also mean that these spaces perform as a social ground to empower women through voicing their political freedoms and exercising their social rights through active engagement through community participation.

## 7.2 Why an ethic of care?

Approaching the urban public space through an ethic of care is significant because care ethics in their basic framework and plausible advancing frameworks employ a combination of feminist and ecological ethico-politics. Ethics of care is specifically helpful to study women's perception and experience of public spaces because while problems with limited time, money, mobility, accessibility, opportunities, and services pose constraints to women's use of public spaces, the problem is also closely related to the ethic of care being limited to private spheres and exclusive to femininity.

In this context, an enlightening study was Kristen Day's research on 'Ethics of care and women's experience of public space' (Day, 2000). Day's study of women's experiences in public spaces in the light of the ethic of care theory suggested that caring acted as a constraint as well as offering possibilities for women to experience public spaces. The study established four key aspects of the care ethics that restricted women's use of public space.

While constrained emotions and constraining responsibilities to exhibit qualities like caring for children, household work, caring selflessly for others, not indulging too much in social interactions that are culturally ingrained in many western as well as eastern societies, constrained resources, and social norms exhibit policies on a higher political level.

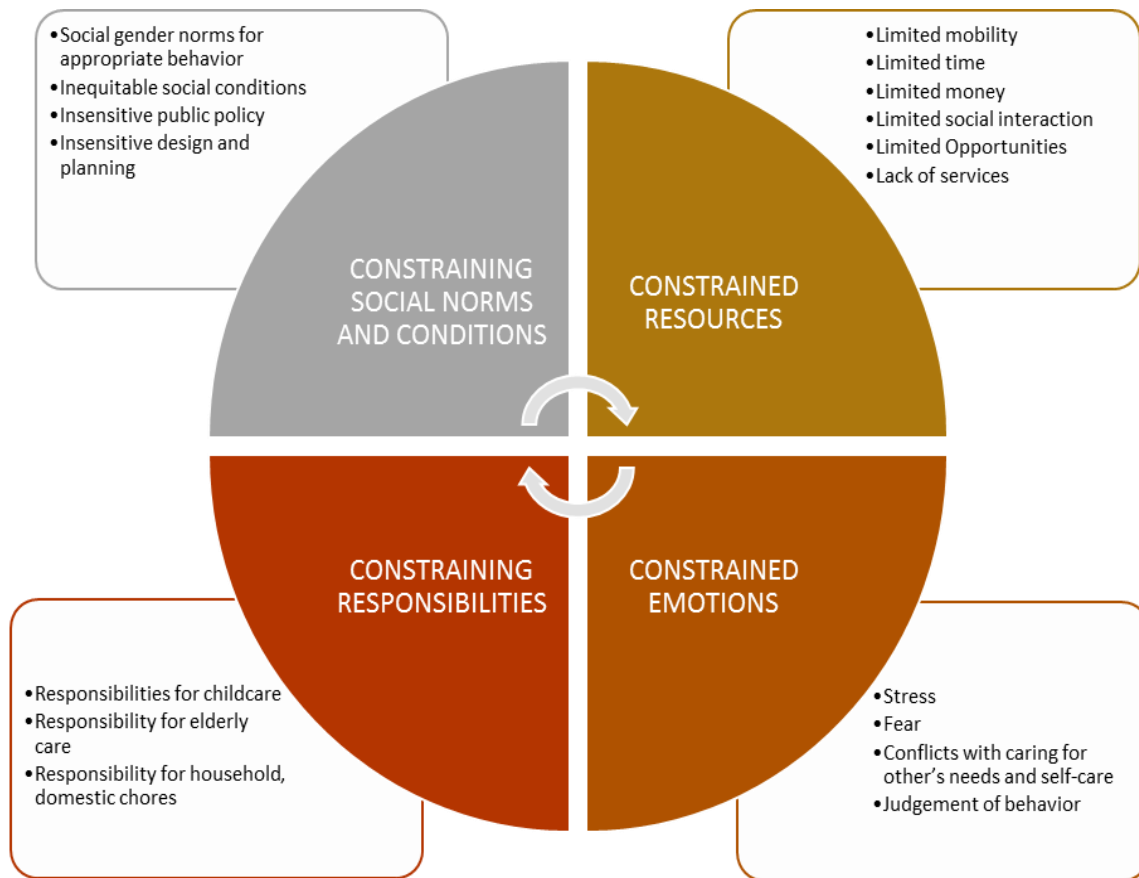


Figure 3: Illustration of Kristen Day's identified constraints in women's use of public space because of the ethic of care (Day, 2000)

Day's research, that included perspectives from esteemed gender studies and planning also suggested that ethics of care can create possibilities for the betterment of women's experience in public spaces.

An ethic of care extended to the public spaces would mean that the divide between private and public lives of women can decline and help women claim their right towards their 'citizenship'. The ethic of care perspectives of initial ethicists like Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and Sara Ruddick, suggest caring more as an activity for immediate recipients and caregivers

with the contextual relationship, which would mean encouraging community-based activities and local community engagement spaces. Joan Tronto's ethical model on similar lines seeks more political impact, which would mean public spaces as active centers of employing caring responsibilities, attentiveness to various needs of women, competence to satisfy those needs and responsiveness of the community.

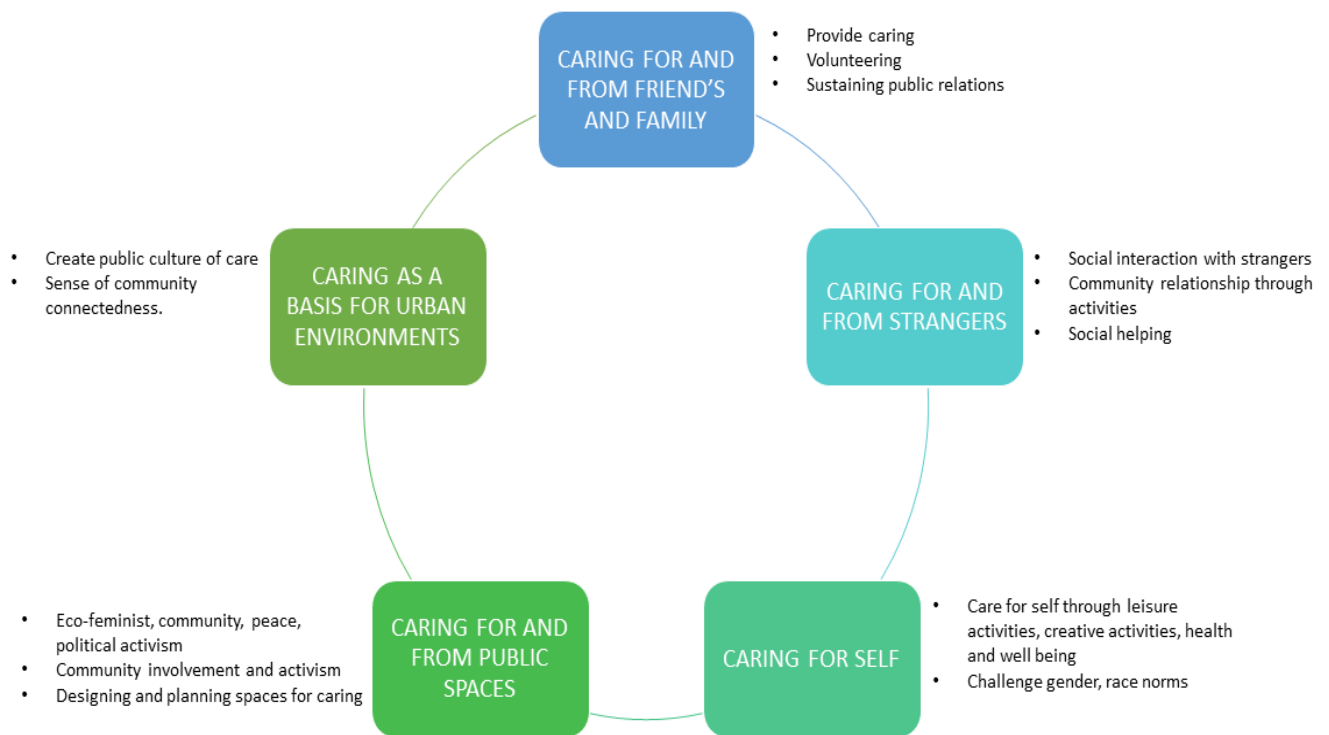


Figure 4: Illustration of Kristen Day's possibilities for experiencing and exercising care through women's use of public space (Day, 2000)

In this chapter, I have developed the perspective that evolves through the various aspects of women's use of public space. I have looked at more elaborate models of the ethic of care

that established a robust political argument for care in application to the urban public space.

I have highlighted the ethic of care theories of Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings but elaborated extensively on the politics of care through Joan Tronto, Grace Clement and Kristen Day's ethic of care perspectives. I thus create a base work for the further discussion towards a holistic definition of care.

## CHAPTER 8 HOLISTIC CARE THROUGH ETHIC OF SEXUATE DIFFERENCE

Ethics of care scholars like Tronto, Clement and Day provide a strong political argument for the implementation of caring in public spaces instead of confining it to the private spheres. The question of care in public space is a complex one. In his work examining ethic of care and strangers in urban public spaces, Urban scholars like Ash Amin notes that the modern urban living shows distant, disconnected people, rushing past each other and carrying multiple cares with them (Amin, 2010). They, however, inhabit familiar and known spaces, although these spaces have various positive and negative effects on them based on their preoccupation of their own notions about the place. Amin calls these encounters as 'Turbulent passions' and as many urban scholars suggest, these spaces of encounters should intermediate and facilitate these social encounters by building interdependence or common purpose, catalyze positive feelings (Amin, 2002; Darling, 2009; Sandercock, 2003)

The political argument for an ethic of care by Tronto presents a strong framework for creating the urban public space environment. It indeed is a significant perspective that can radically change the political nature of decision-making in planning and placemaking in public spaces. However, I think, the political ethic of care focuses more on the needs more than desires and that for me is a philosophical gap. It also relates to divide that is seen between feminist discourses that see equality and sexual difference as two opposite binaries (Deutscher, 2002). Interpretations of Irigaray's political work on subjectivity, highlight that difference is relational and intersubjectivity relating to differences can create common shared spaces of contemporary life. In the context of the Irigarian construct of subjectivity

and difference, gender and cultural theory academic Elspeth Probyn points out: 'we (human beings) consider ourselves as a very private project, but in fact, our subjectivities are intensely communal, 'a public affair' (Thein, 2004). Irigaray's concept of care, even in political language is thus 'love' which is well understood in terms of subjective desire than objective needs.

Thinking through Irigaray's psychoanalytic and phenomenological exercise I find 'desire' to be more central than 'need' and thus more influential in improving women's experience in the public spaces and politically exercise care. The process of catering to needs bears the dangers of being appropriated again by the cultural constructs while desires respond to the intersubjective difference and thus voice positive affectivity<sup>6</sup>. As discussed in the various ways of feelings, non-verbal and verbal expressions, desire is what can potentially determine women's being, movement, senses and perception of the space. The ignorance of this feminine form of 'desire' within dwelling, thinking, and being in public spaces is well documented in many feminist studies such as Elizabeth Wilson's 'The Sphinx in the city' or Jane Rendell's 'The Pursuit of Pleasure' where urban zoning, grandiose of city centers and public spaces, and homogeneity in functions have systematically destroyed the richness of city spaces in London, New York and Chicago, while restricting the movement and the 'right

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6 Affectivity: Positive affectivity is a quality that reflects stable individual differences thus sexual or sexuate difference in positive emotional experience with feelings of cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and energy

to dwell' of women, ethnic minorities, and natural environments (Rawes, 2007; Rendell, 2002; Wilson, 1992)

Constructing this unique politics of care, I find that Irigaray's ethic of sexuate difference can not only change the interpersonal encounters with human subjects but also the encounters with nature. The common space, as Irigaray suggests, is the transcendental space. Here multiple dimensions of different subjectivities that share this sexuate difference can co-exist. Irigaray's ethic of sexual or sexuate difference integration with the politics of the urban public space for a caring space, thus also relates to the biopolitics of the region. In the wider prospecting of striving for ecologically sustainable urban spaces, this biopolitics also forms an integral aspect of care as it situates care both in a non-androcentric as well as non-anthropocentric spectrum.

Public space restoration projects like Agnes Denes 'Wheatfield' in the Battery Park landfill in New York, emit a blend of such feminist and biopolitical nature of care in public urban spaces. The Wheatfield acted as a political statement by being an artwork that evokes the stark contrast of the background of capitalistic trade (the world trade center) and the foreground of a cared ecological landscape of wheat. The Wheatfield also created a space that nurtures and requires nurturing from the occupants and users. Agnes Denes 'Wheatfield' is extensively discussed as feminist and architectural ecologies of care having philosophical overlaps with ecological urbanism (Rawes, 1993).





Figure 5: Agnes Denes's Wheatfield in the battery park landfill along the skyline of world trade towers, New York (Denes, 1982)

Small scale interventions like the Ecobox in Paris (Pourias, Aubry, & Duchemin, 2016) or the community gardens in Manhattan, conspired by the Green Guerillas in 1973 (Smith & Kurtz, 2003), exhibited that urban interventions on the community local level can go a long way in the ecological well-being of the city.

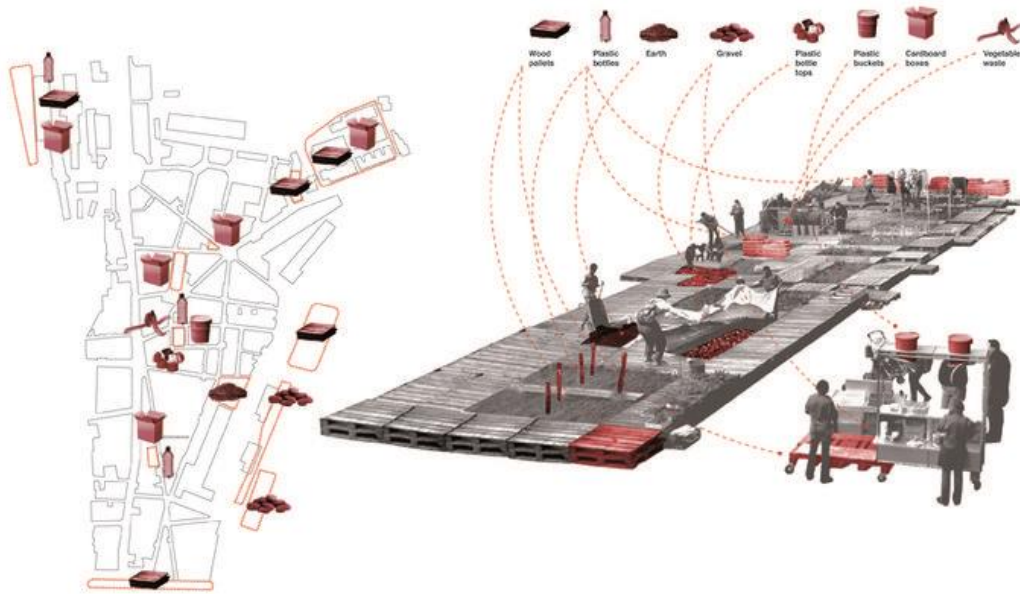


Figure 6: EcoBox Carrot city, series of self-managed projects introduced into derelict and underused spaces in Paris' La Chapelle neighborhood, in the 18th Arrondissement, beginning in 2001



Figure 7: Community Garden in Manhattan New York (Smith & Kurtz, 2003)

In this chapter, I have discussed how I have shaped my definition of care for the public spaces in cities. Spatially, the ethics of care reflects into public habitats in cities that work on socio-political as well as biopolitical level. In the next chapter, I have discussed my principles of placemaking that have developed after engaging in this philosophical design of care.



## CHAPTER 9: PROPOSING ETHICS OF CARE FOR SUSTAINABLE PLACEMAKING

### 9.1 Care and placemaking

This research investigates the deeper meanings and poetics of the public space through an ethical lens of care. My definition of care has been shaped through confound investigation into the philosophy of the feminine, ethics of sexual and sexuate difference, ecological ethics, cultural theories and architectural spatial-politics. Thus, this unique framework of ethics of care for its reflection on the urban public environment is what I hold the closest to urban social and environmental sustainability.

The approach I am offering through this dissertation is a unique way of designing architecture, spaces and establishing their relationship with human and non-human subjects. Aspects of relationship with oneself and the other, being, sensing, moving, perceiving beauty and addressing the sexual difference, as discussed in the chapters above demand to shift our existing paradigms of analyzing, designing and creating public spaces. The definition for public placemaking then inevitably starts to evolve as a new one, as the spatial environment and its relationship to the subjects that dwell in it, adopt a language of care. As a result, this research is also, in its own way, a new method for placemaking.

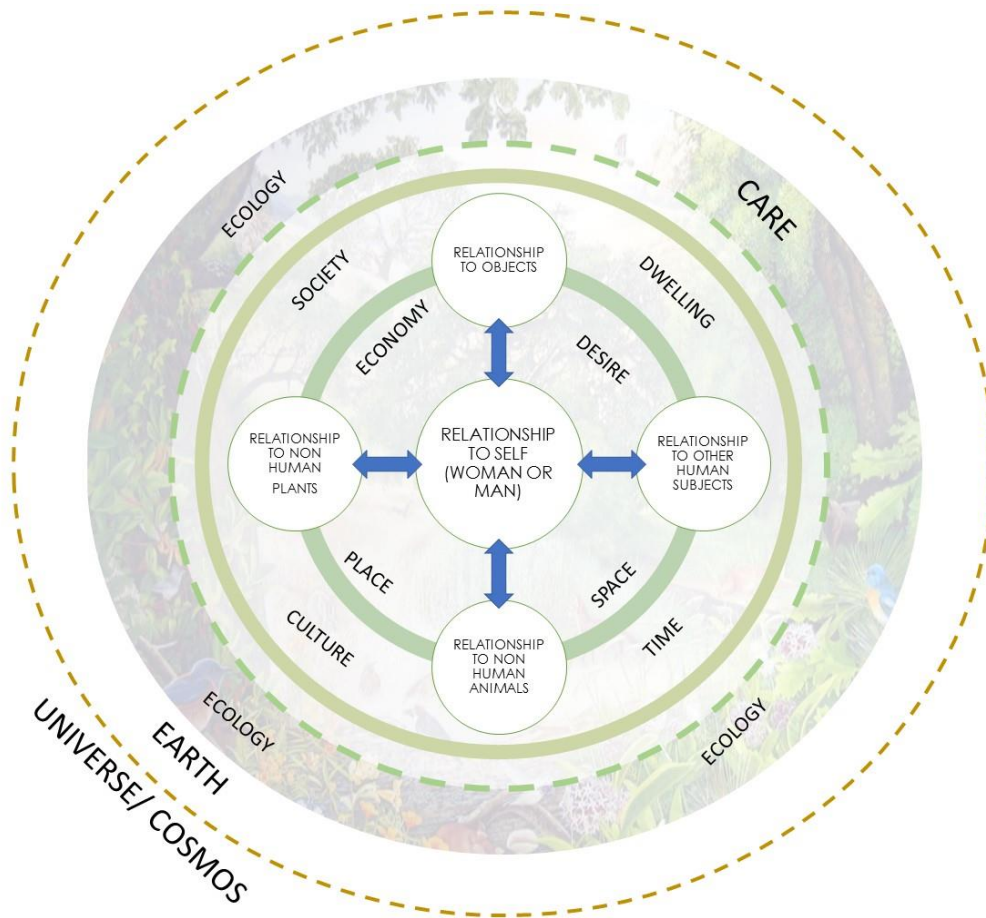


Figure 8: A non-hierarchical approach of subjectivity developing philosophy of sustainability through study of ethics of care and sexuate difference

The above diagram stands as an evolved definition of sustainability which I seek as an approach for urban sustainability and public space design. Developed through Irigaray's ethic of a sexuate difference this approach offers to establish care ethics into our perspectives for sustainability. As care ethicist see 'disconnection' as their basic cause of concern, I have placed relationship to ourself, to our community, to our ecological community, and to the objective world within the context of place, culture, and ecology.

In the following part, I elucidate, according to my own creative self, the insinuations on place making the public space. However, I encourage to consider them as an example not limited to the theory of care that I have established till now.

## 9.2 How can we create public spaces through care?

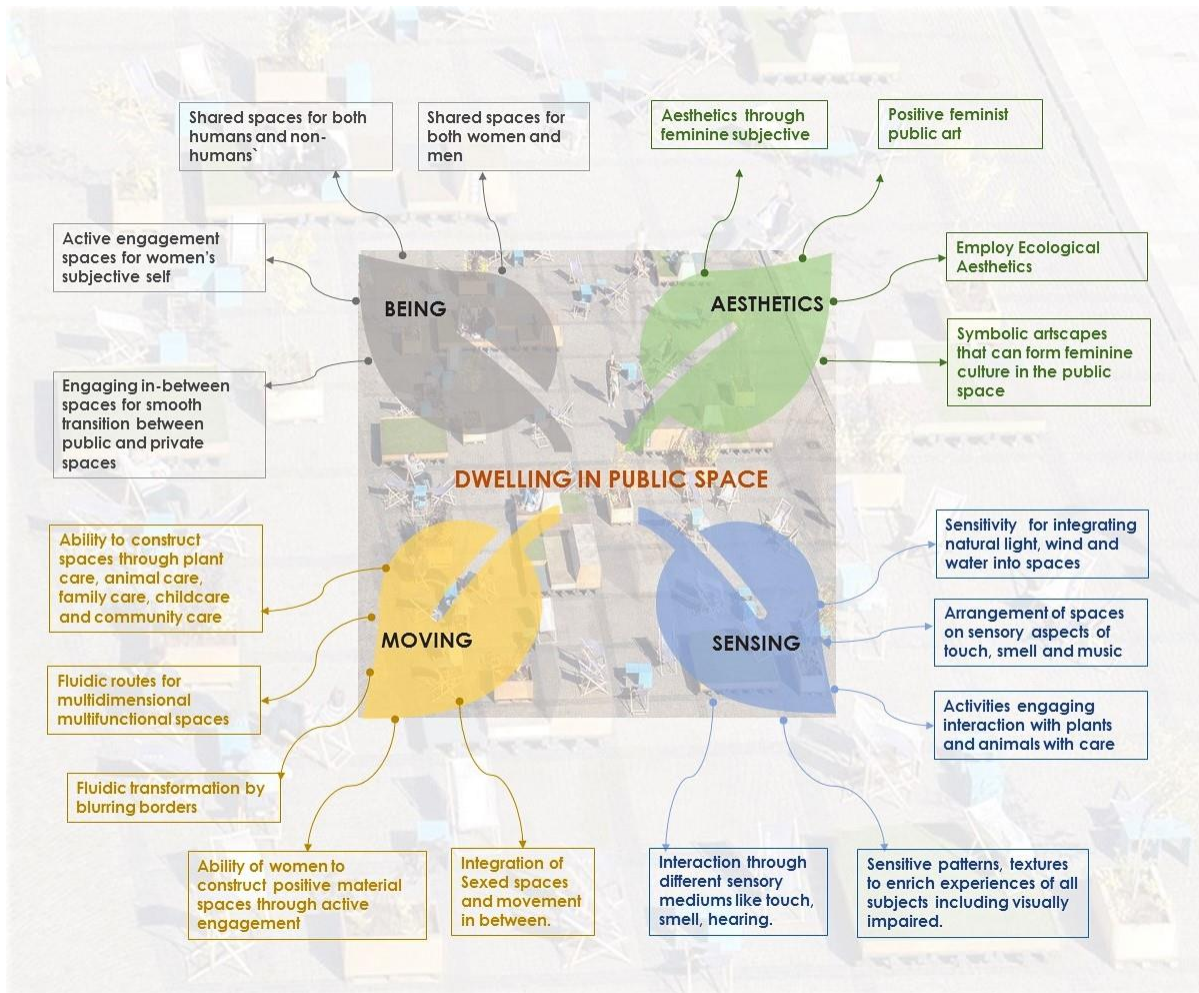


Figure 9: Thinking about dwelling in public space through care

As discussed in Chapter 4, subjectivity and sexual difference are central to my exploration of public space, women's experience and environmental sustainability. The figure above

provides the key aspects of public space that were discussed with respect to being, sensing, moving and aesthetically perceiving the public spaces.

Following are some afterthoughts that evoke placemaking after thinking through the ethic of care.

### **'BEING' IN THE PUBLIC SPACES**

- Public spaces can reinforce or evoke sustainable lifestyles through community behaviors and engagement. Have activities that involve people in caring about the natural ecosystem, the flora and fauna and localize the economic capital to the best possible extent
- Being in the public spaces is critically important to women, children and other marginalized groups that face exclusion. Spaces that actively engage these subjects can change the public space culture
- Caring is mostly exclusive to private spheres, caring in public outdoor and open public spaces can integrate better community values of hospitality and a culture of love. Integrate spaces that support such caring activities like community open air learning spaces, reading spaces, child caring, health improving activities and shared spaces.

### **'MOVING' IN THE PUBLIC SPACES**

- Movement can define the nature of public space. Include spaces that can serve multiple functions at the same time and thus promote easy movement and accessibility

- Private life constraints are found to be inhibiting women's use of public space. So, integrate activities that ease their movement by improving proximity and increasing heterogeneous space functions
- Sexed spaces for women that can also be shared by men, in an environment of care, can help better movement in public spaces.

### ***'SENSING' IN THE PUBLIC SPACES***

- This aspect has all to do with the sensory atmosphere that a public space creates and should challenge the hierarchy of senses that establishes vision as the most important one.
- Public spaces can be designed based on the sense of touch, smell, sounds, and thus recognize the differences of all the subjects. Textures, odors and sounds can be responsive to the sensual aspects of human as well as non-human subjects and thus be more helpful to design the experience within the public space.
- Designing through a sensory experience also implies the best use of natural light, wind, water, soil and vegetation and other natural materials which can help the energy consumptions and material sustainability and economy of the place.
- This also means that plant and animal care can be established as primary activities that happen in the public spaces.



## AESTHETICS IN THE PUBLIC SPACE

- Aesthetics in public spaces impact strongly to condition the psychology of the users.  
Aesthetics if thought through care can change the androcentric notions of beauty and create spaces that positively affect the feminine place in the public
- Symbolic art spaces designed through feminist aesthetics can also create public spaces as positive spaces for social change towards gender equity.
- Aesthetics, which are derived from the ecological systems and elements can establish public spaces more sustainable
- More human and relatable scales with positive and interactive functions can make spaces more lively, energetic and engage the community

## *FIGHTING FEAR*

- The spatial fear experienced by women can be tackled by designing the public space with better movement paths, avoiding dark enclosed narrow enclaves and designing multifunctional spaces that remain more active all throughout the day.
- Positive art can also tackle the fear of any unwanted activity.
- Global and cultural fears can be tackled by designing spaces that relate to subjects and generate hospitality for them despite their citizenship.

## *INDUCING BELONGINGNESS*

- Design spaces with active engagement in caregiving or receiving activities that do not focus on economic consumerism more and less on free activities

- Spaces can induce belongingness through visual and sensory experiences so designing with natural materials with softer scapes than hardscapes can create the feeling of elemental belonging. Materials like clay, soil, sand and pebbles which also employ better stormwater efficiency and less embodied energy can create urban spaces with more natural textures and sensory experiences.
- Public spaces need to induce belongingness in women, more than men, and thus activities than encouraging women to loiter, engage in play, conversation, sharing, caring and be cared for, can help to induce belongingness and blur the divide between private and public spaces.

#### *CREATING CURIOSITY, CULTIVATING DIFFERENCE AND HAPPINESS*

- Interacting with natural elements, natural materials, plants, and animals generate our elemental curiosity and have a positive effect on the human psychology and help healing, cognitive development, and connectedness to our elemental self.
- Feminine perspectives on desire and happiness should be well thought of.

#### *SPECIFICITY*

- Relate to the bioregion and biocultural. Local flora and fauna should be integrated and propagated through spaces.
- Spaces should induce 'self-affection' within female subjects to increase their belongingness in the space.

***MOBILITY***

- Women subjects should be able to actively and materially engage in the spaces.
- Proximity to multiple services is important, design spaces that work on local, neighborhood and city levels.
- Public spaces must have well-connected routes to public transport and encourage pedestrian and basic bicycle use.

***SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY***

- Efficient visibility, heterogeneous spaces, and multifunctional activity areas can ensure safe spaces.
- Multiplicity of spaces and creating engagement on streets for maximum eyes on the street for natural surveillance.
- Active sidewalks: Integrating small play spaces, interaction spaces, small scale markets and activating the street life through performing arts or music can have more eyes on the street and thus ensure safety for longer periods.
- Accessibility to basic needs of women, mothers, disabled users, animals, and plants should all be given priority while taking design decisions.

***INCLUSIVITY***

- Design by considering sexual difference and not gender neutral
- Cultural sharing activities should be encouraged.

- Localization of economy, natural materials and skills.
- Strategic use of essentialism to represent the identity of marginalized or oppressed groups.
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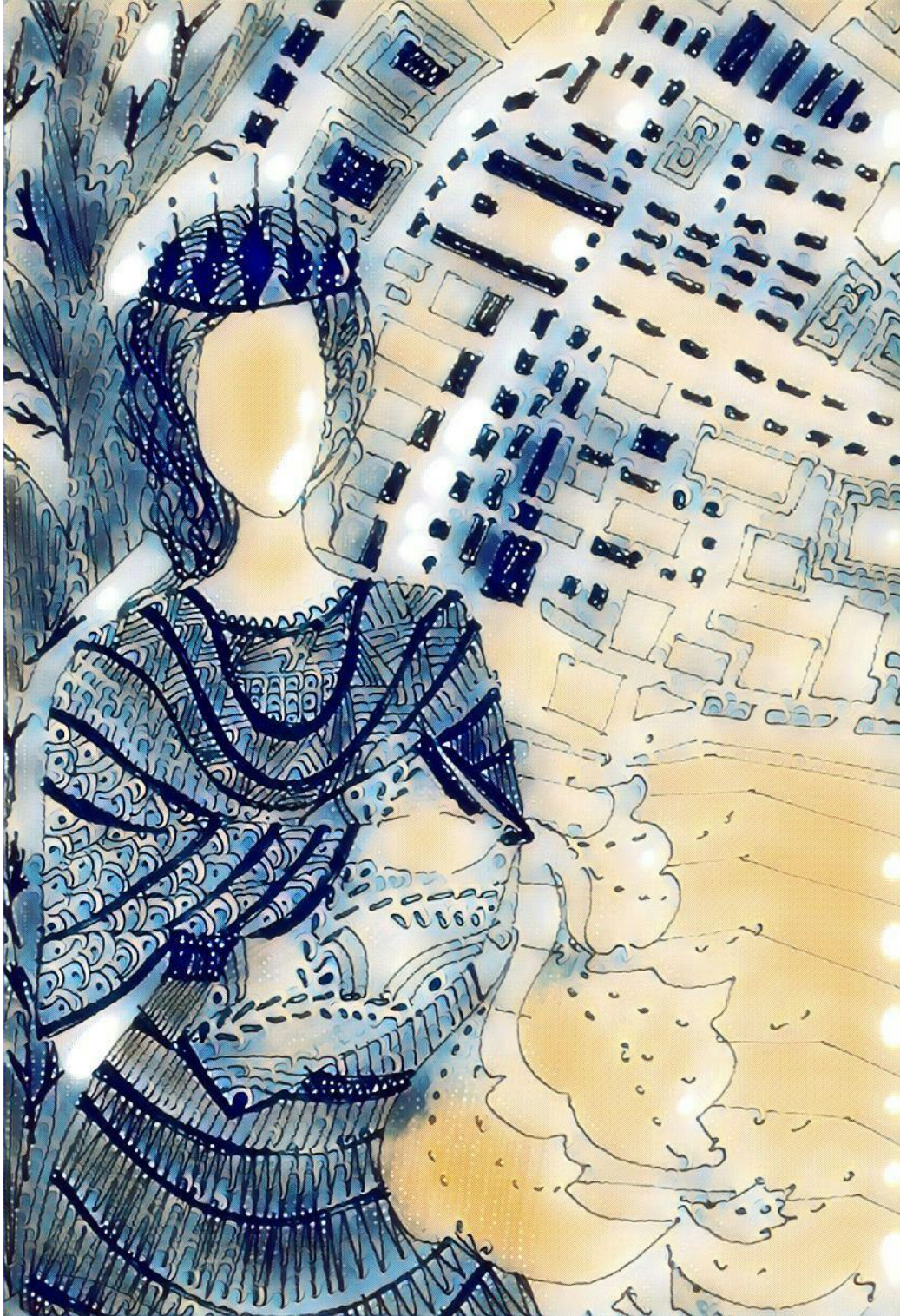
All these place-making suggestions that are derived through my ethic of care strive to propose these spaces on the local, neighborhood and the city level. This would mean that public spaces like natural Greenlands, parks, and greenbelts would not be designed separately but all the typologies of open public spaces employ this kind of placemaking to establish care as a central design value in urban environments.

The current definition of UN Habitat's Placemaking for public spaces is: 'A collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm to maximize share value. More than just promoting better urban design. Placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution' (Project for Public Spaces Inc., 2015)

The definition I generate and expand through this thesis is thus:

**'Placemaking is an integrative process that reconnects the community and the piece of land within an ecological, social and cultural context through acts of caregiving and receiving.**

**Placemaking facilitates caregiving and care to receive activities through the creative multifunctional use of space and an induced feeling of belongingness to the place and environmental concern for other human and non-human users.'**



### ANTIGONE BURYING THE MATERNAL OTHER

Illustration of Antigone performing burial rights on her brother Polyneices in the city of Thebes

## Chapter 10: CONCLUSION

### 10.1 Summarizing care

This thesis establishes a rare and novel perspective of 'care' to be ethically employed in the architecture and design theories Urban public space, placemaking and community planning. I have established a strong argument for care ethics by elaborating their emphasis on ecological sustainability, social equity, and well-being.

Through the chapters in the first section of this thesis, I have established the ground connecting philosophical links from various perspectives in deep ecology, ecological urbanism, feminism, ecofeminism and environmental sustainability. I have also provided a scholarly conditioning of the history of urban public spaces and its connection to women's experiences in the cities. The first section of the thesis does the significant work of highlighting the divides between city-ecology, man-woman, human nature and human-non-human dichotomies that lay at the core of major environmental and social problems today, thus highlighting a need for a significant paradigm shift that guides us from this duality to multiplicity.

The second section of this thesis has brought forward the aspects of public space that are evidently close to the female psyche and thus analyses aspects of feminine being, sensing, moving and perceiving through feminine subjectivity. This section also introduces the Luce

Irigaray's Ethic of sexual difference that has been highly influential in this ethical inquiry for care in public space. This section throws light on the verbal as well as non-verbal associations that define the relationship of women with the public space through fear, belongingness, curiosity and happiness. In this section, I have also elaborated the aspects of women's political agency, rights, and subjectivity by elaborating on specificity, mobility, accessibility, safety and inclusivity through a critical lens.

The last section provides the perspective and framework for the language of care to be established in the public spaces. This section draws important elements from the existing ethics of care perspectives that establish the political importance of care. With the help of important flags covered in the previous sections, I establish my own Ethic of Care to suggest holistic care for sustainable urban public spaces.

This section also provides placemaking pointers and a platform for shaping the design theory of the public space.

## 10.2 Future of this care

This thesis was a work of carefully conceived and nurtured an understanding of through various experiences, meetings, and discussions addressing the common ground between ethics and public space and society. The theoretical and the ethical perspective seeks to establish a new method towards sustainable thinking, architectural design, and living. The ethic of care that I have developed here, see further this perspective through theoretical



collaborations in philosophy, impact on policy and placemaking in urban theory and also implementations through design interventions. The framework will however not be a static, fixated rulebook but a more of dynamic tool to be developed further as the future of ecofeminist theory develops for creating sustainable cities.

### 10.3 Evoking care

I would like to conclude this philosophical work of architecture by evoking a dialogue in favor of care and sexual difference or sexuate difference through an interpretation of the character Antigone, which is nurtured by thinking with Irigaray. The story of Antigone is germinated here for the politics of the feminine, nature and the city, all together.

‘Antigone’ is a Greek tragedy by Sophocles written in or before 441 BC and is the third of the three Theban plays. Antigone, the main female protagonist is a character who recognizes her familial duty and fights for performing burial rights on the death of her brother Polyneices in the city of Thebes. The king Creon is the king who denies the deceased, the burial rights, by justifying his power as a king. Many prominent male philosophers like Hegel, propagate a common notion of Antigone being a young suicidal anarchist and assumption of her love for death as she fought staunchly for the burial rights of her brother apart from a strong resistance and cooperation from her own docile sister (Irigaray, 2012). Luce Irigaray’s interpretation suggests that Antigone’s insistence on the burial of her brother was not about justice, her respect for dead or death but was the very natural care for the cosmic order i.e sunlight and humanity’s earthly home. Antigone’s stance conveyed that maternal genealogy must be respected and to do that even the civil or political order should be questioned. The



decay of the dead body which was of her brothers was not only a disrespect for a mutual transcendence or sexual difference that she and her brother had, but it also polluted the atmosphere of the city and the well-being of the air, plants, animals, and people. Her fight was her need for reorganizing civil society through an act of care.

The economy of capitalism, patriarchy much like Creon, has been organized with an emphasis on wealth or power rather than on respect for life and the intersubjective between people necessary for this respect to existing. This has essentially established the hierarchical importance of power over compassion, objective over subjective and thus justice over care. In her critique, Irigaray proposes that Civil rights and responsibilities should give freedom for each woman and make them responsible for it. It should give them rights that enable them to escape from the alienation of family and state and this implies self and intersubjective care.

This Antigone complies to a political and ethical subject position as a woman. I reflect on this interpretation of the character of Antigone belonging to a very sustainable culture of subjectivity which recognizes the familial connection and I see this as care. This care is recognizing not only our own subjective self but also respecting the mutual sexual difference that we share with the other. This difference when extended to our familial connection to our counterparts within the natural ecosystem i.e plant and animal species means recognition of their subjectivities and respecting them. I, therefore, see care, obligatory to the public spheres or public spaces which can further the language and culture of sustainability that we all need for today and our future.

## POSTSCRIPT

I would like to conclude with my idea of care in a public space in a poetic expression just as I started this conversation in one.

*To me, the 'you'ness is unknown, so is the 'me'ness to you*

*We share a space that is communal though, a mutual transcendence in, we can be*

*A place that hazes the boundaries, rearranging a distortion that we live*

*Places of joyance and belonging, to move, enchant and perceive*

*A place that nurtures us as we do*

*A place for tomorrow starting from today,*

*A place under the sky, a humble abode*

*That lets us dwell and dwells inside us*

*Spaces that touch our senses,*

*Spaces that move our soul*

*Spaces with light and energy*

*Spaces, restoring our elemental synergy*

*A place that brings out the 'me'ness in your soul, and the 'you'ness in me.*

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